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# Roberto Giobbi's CARD COLLEGE

Volume 2



Illustrated by  
BARBARA GIOBBI-EBNÖTHER

Translated from the German by  
RICHARD HATCH



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## THANKS!

This second volume owes a large debt to those same people I cited on this page in *Volume 1*. My deepest gratitude, undiminished, goes out to them again.

My wife and friend, Barbara, whose twelve hundred or so painstaking illustrations and helpful criticism have shaped this course in innumerable ways, all positive; to Richard Hatch, whose translation of my German text continues to reflect my thoughts with elegance and precision; to Stephen Minch and his Hermetic Press, Inc., whose care for word, thought and book has once again manifested itself from first page to last. This time around he was aided by Jim Krenz, who took time from his busy performing career to proofread this volume with extraordinary sensitivity and intelligence. Then there were Bill Kalush, Milt Kort, Jon Racherbaumer, and Randy Wakeman, who generously provided valuable credit information. Finally, I would like to thank all my magical friends all over the world, and in particular the genial Juan Tamariz, for their direct and indirect suggestions, which continue to influence the contents of these volumes.

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авторы: *А.А. Матвеев, А.А. Матвеев*

КАНИСТ МАТЕМАТИКИ

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## Introduction to Volume 2

Dear Reader,

Like *Volume 1*, the order of chapters in this second volume was not arrived at haphazardly. You would do well to study the chapters one at a time in the sequence presented. Of course, you certainly could learn the techniques in this volume in a different order. But if you want a solid understanding of card magic, which you will then put into practice, you need to study every chapter.

Chapter 27 deals with theoretical topics, which I believe are important for effortless learning and successful performing. This chapter contains the sum of my knowledge on performance theory with playing cards, gathered in over twenty years of reading, attending lectures, watching videos, listening to audio cassettes, engaging in conversations and from personal performing experience. At first you may think the advice offered is not overly important, since you have been, to this point, focused on technique and the subsequent tricks. But over time you will want to re-read this chapter. Only then will you discover how to improve, just when you thought you no longer could.

Finally, concerning sources for the material in this volume, you will find bibliographical notes at the back of the book (page 487). Listed there are the various works from which certain sleights, tricks and ideas in these pages have been drawn. I've made these notes as complete as I can, although with a field as large and complex as card magic, oversights are inevitable. I apologize for any omissions due to my ignorance or faulty memory. My intention is to make available information that is critically needed, bestowing the deserved laurels whenever I know the correct brows on which to lay them.

Roberto Giobbi  
*Reinach, 1996*

## CHAPTER 17

# OVERHAND SHUFFLE TECHNIQUES, PART 2

*"Never attempt, in public, anything that cannot be performed with the utmost ease, in private."*

Maskelyne and Devant



This chapter contains several advanced overhand shuffle techniques. Mastery of these will provide you with the proper foundation for all other advanced techniques using this shuffle.



## Bringing the Bottom Card to the Top

You can use the method described in Chapter 2 under the heading "Control of the Top Card" to bring the bottom card of the deck to the top (*Volume 1*, page 43, second paragraph). But running the last few cards singly can often look awkward, and you can't always be certain that at the end you have just one card left in your right hand. You may need to glance at the deck and visibly slow down the shuffle. The following technique avoids these disadvantages and is based on an idea by my friend, Christian Scherer. Years ago, Dai Vernon devised a similar approach.<sup>1</sup>

For this description, let's assume that the top card will be shuffled to the bottom, then returned by another shuffle to the top. Begin an overhand shuffle by running off the top card alone. Shuffle off the rest of the deck onto this single card. Immediately before your right hand grasps the deck to begin the second shuffle, move your left little finger against the bottom of the deck and lightly push back the bottom card, so that it projects about a quarter of an inch beyond the inner end of the deck.



Place your right thumb on the edge of the inner end of this card near the raised inner right corner and pull the card slightly to the right, simultaneously pushing it forward. This brings the card flush with the deck, but the right thumb maintains a break between the card and the rest of the deck.

Give the deck an overhand shuffle. You will sense the approach of the break and can release the last few cards above it as a block. You now hold a single card, which you can allow to fall on top of the deck cleanly, without hesitation, and without disturbing the rhythm of the shuffle.



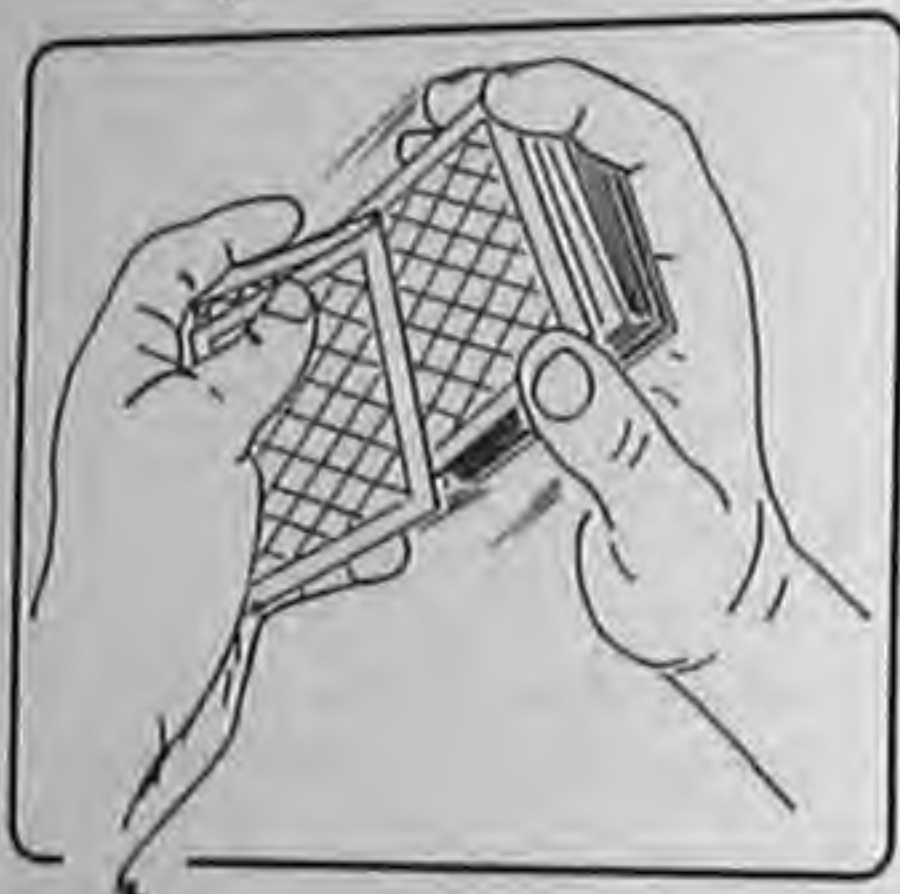


# Controlling the Top and Bottom Stocks

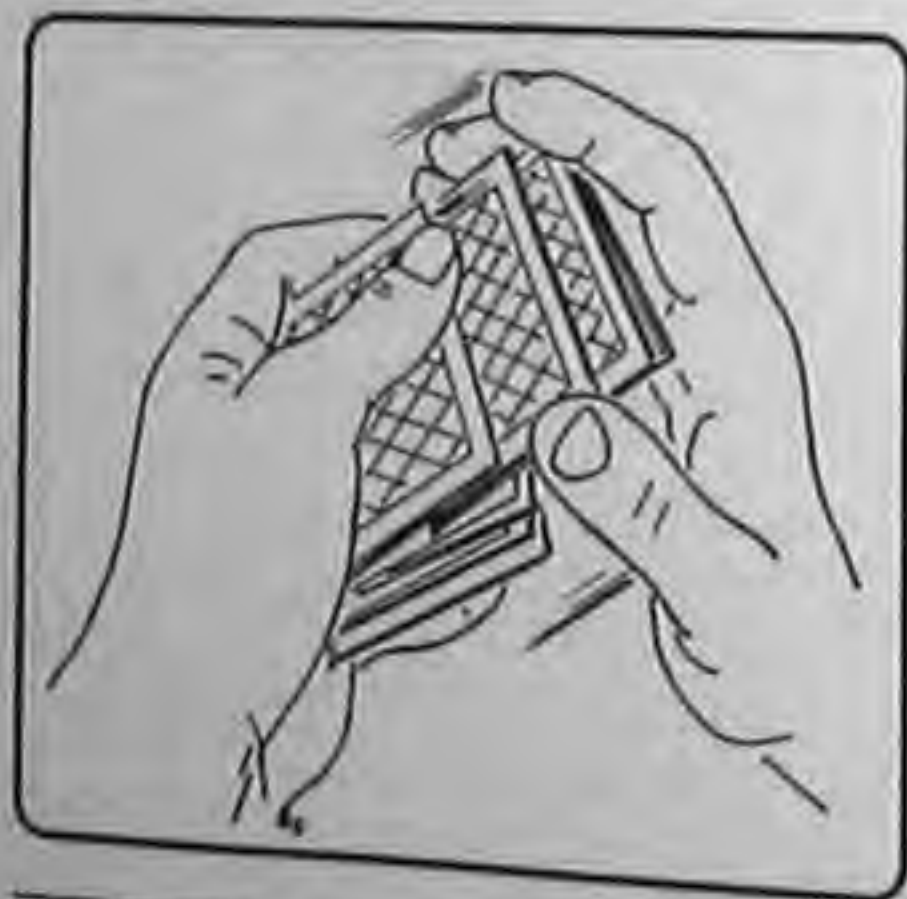
This technique combines the injog with another principle introduced here, the *outjog*. The combination is not easy, but it is surely the best-known overhand shuffle technique for preserving both the top and bottom stocks after two shuffles.



To observe the success of the shuffle as you execute it, place the four Aces on top of the deck and the four Kings on the bottom. To begin the shuffle, use your left thumb to pull slightly more than four cards (the Ace portion) from the top of the deck.



Injog the next card, leaving it projecting from the inner end of the left hand's stock.

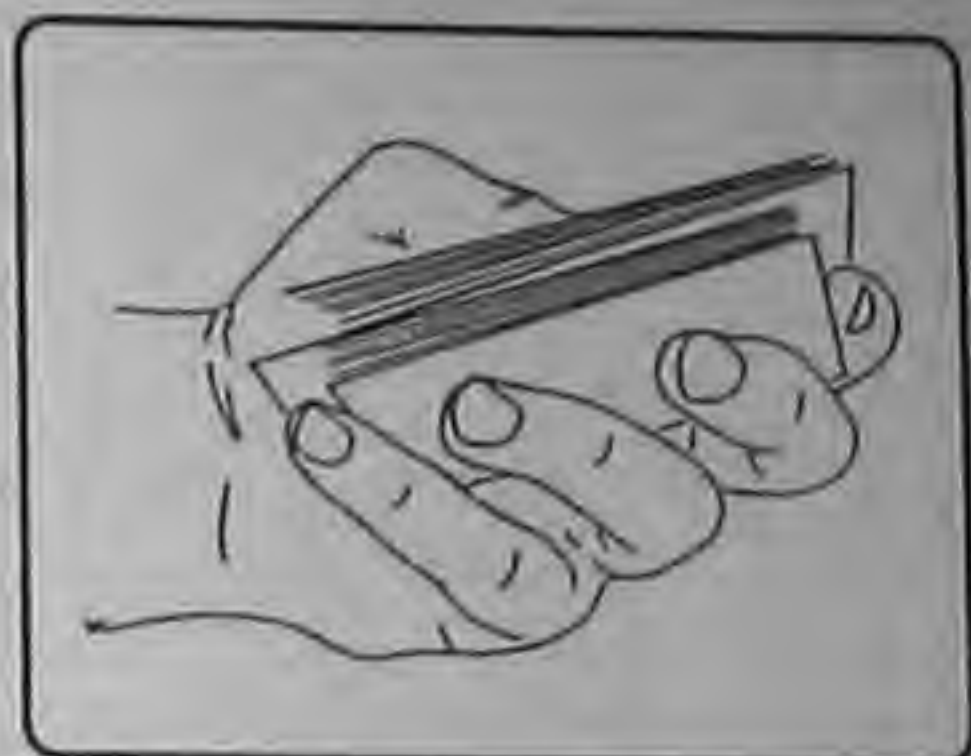


Shuffle off until the right hand holds the four Kings and just a few cards more.

Toss these cards on top of those in the left hand, so that the bottom card of this last packet projects from the outer end. This is accomplished as follows: As the left edges of the right hand's cards contact the left hand, continue to grip the packet with your right hand. Then immediately lift the lowermost cards of the right hand's packet about half an inch as your right fingers release the cards above them.



Lower these retained cards as you move them forward, so that they project about half an inch from the outer end of the deck, and release them. They are now *outjogged*. This completes the first shuffle. The illustration shows the result, with the right hand moved aside. Note that the left index finger plays the same role with the outjogged card that the little finger plays with the injogged card. They are place-keepers.



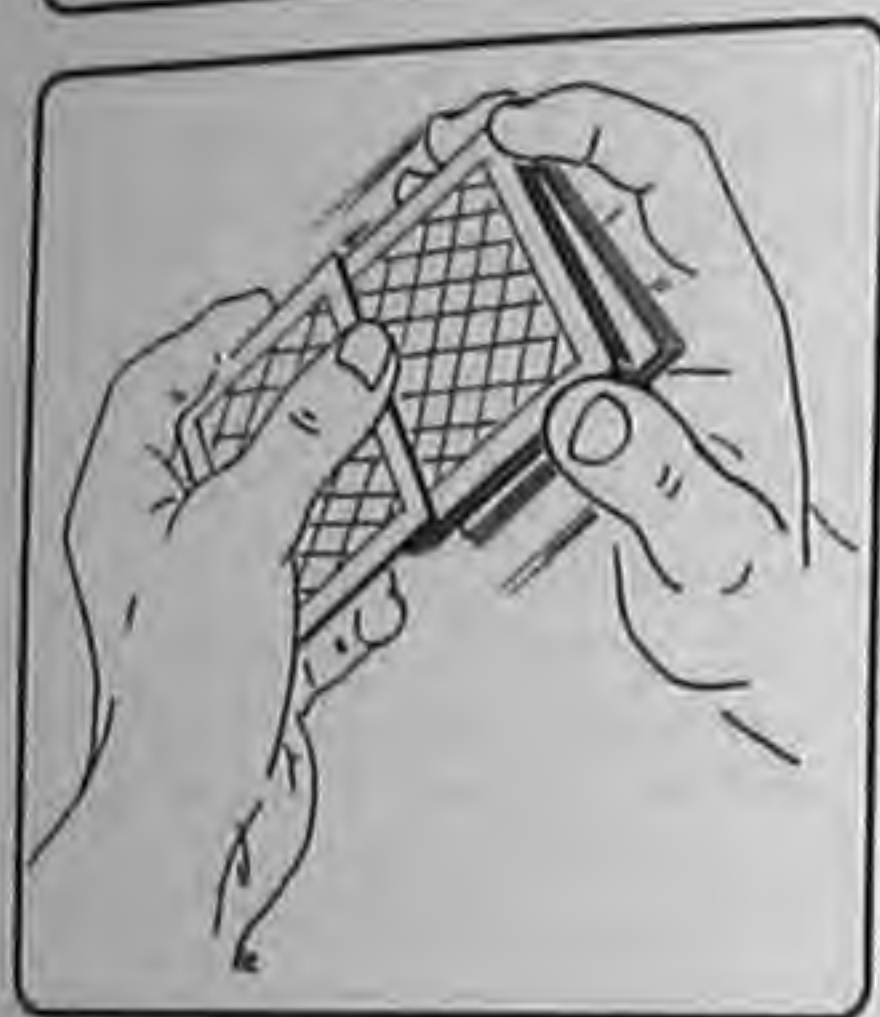
To introduce an element of time misdirection into the shuffle, briefly pat the right side of the deck with the right palm. This creates an impression of the cards being squared, and momentarily interrupts the rhythm of the shuffle.







Then continue with the second shuffle sequence: Press inward on the outjogged card with the right middle finger, creating a break. Simultaneously press the right thumb inward against the injogged card, taking a break under it in the usual manner. This divides the deck into three sections.



With your right hand, lift the lowest two sections in the first shuffle motion, while the left hand holds back those cards above the right middle-finger break by pulling them off with the left thumb. Shuffle off to the right thumb's break in two or three shuffle motions and toss the last section, unchanged, onto the left hand's cards. This results in retaining the order of the top and bottom stocks while the middle of the deck is shuffled.

### Check Points

1. When forming the break under the outjogged card or cards, the left index finger can assist the right middle finger by pressing against the outer edge of the outjogged card to open the break slightly. The right middle finger then widens the break and secures it.
2. This technique becomes easier as the sizes of the top and bottom stocks expand, for instance, to roughly thirteen cards each. You can always use such larger stocks, since controlling more cards than necessary still preserves the smaller stock you require.

# The Lift Shuffle

This special overhand shuffle technique can be used to achieve many goals. Possible applications of great complexity will not be discussed in this course, but are often encountered in the literature. Forewarned is forearmed: Studying the technique as it is presented here will facilitate your future understanding.

## TOP STOCK CONTROL WITH THE LIFT SHUFFLE

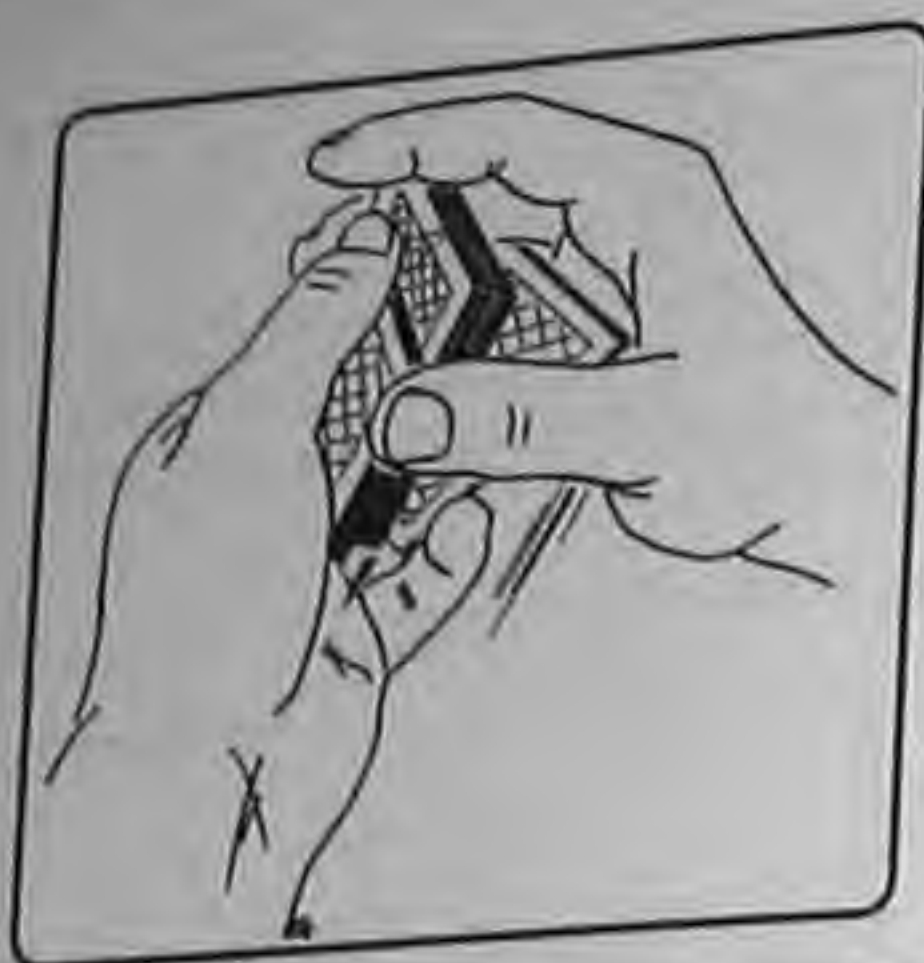
Assume that the four Aces are on top of the deck. Place the deck in overhand shuffle position and begin the shuffle by using your left thumb to pull the top stock (let's call it the Ace block) into your left hand. You needn't worry about drawing off precisely four cards here. If a few more are taken, no harm is done.



As the second shuffle motion is made, it is natural to bring the remainder of the deck over the Ace block for the left thumb to pull off the next small packet. In this position, the middle phalanges of the right thumb and ring finger respectively contact the inner and outer ends of the Ace block. The illustration shows a transparent view of the position, with the right hand moved aside.







Grip the Ace block lightly between your right thumb and middle finger and lift it in a continuation of the shuffle action, stealing it under the unshuffled portion of the deck while maintaining a break between the portions. As you execute this packet steal, with your left thumb pull the next block of cards off the deck. The right middle, ring and little fingers are held together naturally and prevent an otherwise exposed view from the front. Shuffle off until you reach the break, then toss the remaining, stolen Ace block on top. The four Aces are once again on top in their original order.

### Check Points

1. As with most overhand shuffle techniques, an even rhythm is an important part of the deception. Don't hesitate as you pick up the controlled block of cards. There should be no interruption of the shuffle.
2. There are two bad angles for this technique: from above and from behind. The rear view can be blocked by your

body. The view from above can be masked by turning your body slightly to the right. This gives those spectators who might have been able to see the deck from above a view of the backs of the cards instead. Once you are aware of the bad angles, you can generally cover them by changing your position or the angle of the deck.

### KEY-CARD PLACEMENT WITH THE LIFT SHUFFLE

The lift shuffle provides an excellent technique for the placement of a key card whose identity you already know. (Methods for gaining this information will be taught in Chapter 23 on "The Glimpse", page 353.) The technique appears extremely fair, as you are constantly shuffling.

Your key card is initially the top card of the deck. The spectator has just chosen a card and is requested to return it to the deck. As you make this request, begin a lift shuffle, stealing the top stock between your right ring finger and thumb during the second shuffle action. Continue shuffling the cards as you instruct the spectator to call *stop* at any time. As soon as you hear this command, drop the stolen block onto the shuffled off cards in the left hand. Interrupt the shuffle to extend your left hand toward the spectator, and ask that the chosen card be replaced in the deck. This positions the chosen card immediately above the key card. Shuffle the remaining cards from your right hand onto the left hand's cards. You can also eliminate the request that the spectator call *stop*, and simply interrupt the shuffle, extending your left hand for the replacement of the chosen card.



### Check Points

1. When the card is replaced on the left hand's portion, complete the shuffle in a deliberate fashion, visually emphasizing that the selection becomes truly and hopelessly lost in the center of the deck.
2. After performing this shuffle to place the key card over the selection, you should employ the subtlety of a second

shuffle, which keeps the key card and chosen card together. First, shuffle off a few cards, then drop a block containing at least the key card and chosen card, and shuffle off the remaining cards in two or three shuffle actions. To review the details of this shuffle, see "Shuffling with a Key Card" in *Volume 1*, Chapter 10 (page 144).

## Controlling the Entire Deck: the G. W. Hunter Shuffle

This is a remarkably useful technique, since it preserves the order of all the cards in the deck. And yet to the spectators, it looks as though you've shuffled the entire deck. It was devised sometime in the early twentieth century by the clever British magician G. W. Hunter.<sup>2</sup> This description contains no illustrations, as all phases have been described and illustrated in previous sections.

Place the deck in overhand shuffle position. With your left thumb, pull off slightly less than half the deck in the first shuffle action.

Next run four cards, injog the fifth and throw the rest of the deck on top. With your right thumb, form a break above the injogged card, exactly as described in "Controlling the Bottom Stock", *Volume 1*, Chapter 2 (page 47).

Begin the second shuffle by pulling off all the cards above the break. Run the next five cards and throw the remainder of the deck on top. The deck is now back in its original order. What you have in fact done is to shuffle (reverse, actually) five cards in the center of the deck, then "unshuffle" them with a second shuffle. By shuffling these five cards twice, the deck is returned to its initial order.

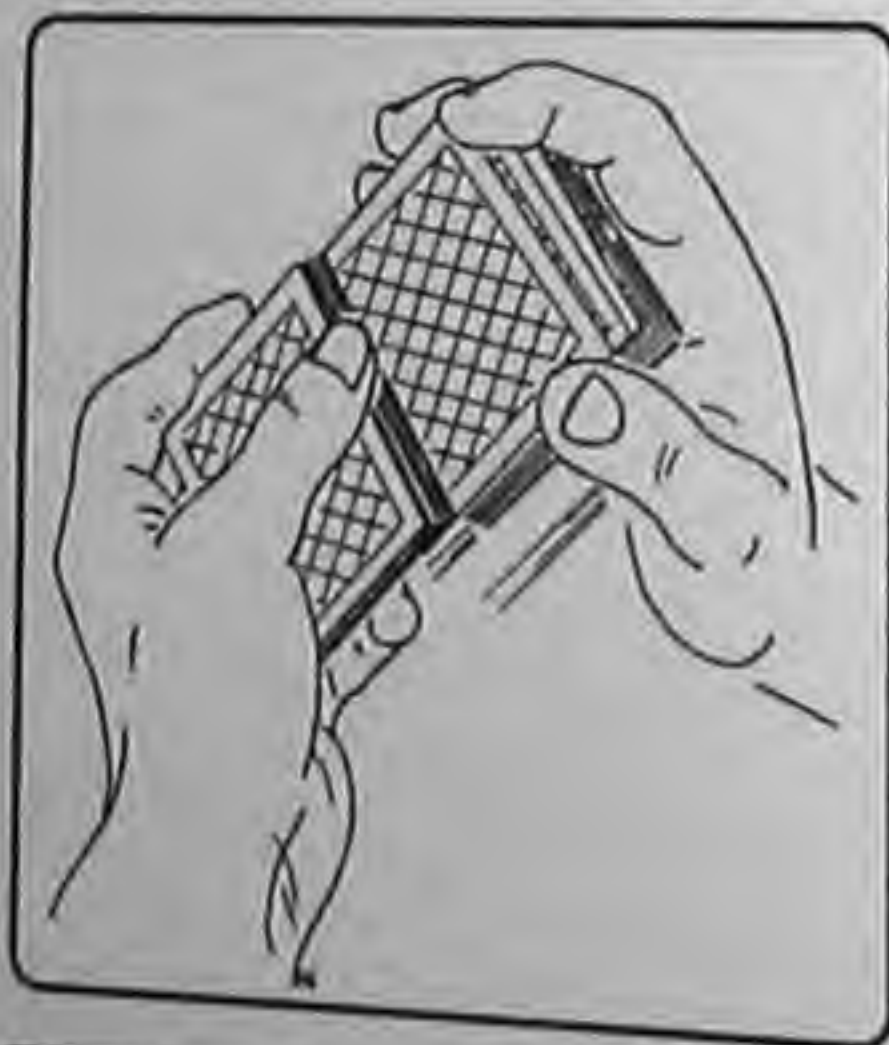


### Check Points

1. The rhythm of the shuffle is critical in creating a perfect deception. It must look and sound exactly as if the deck is shuffled in six ordinary shuffle actions. The sound made by a single card being run will probably be slightly softer than that made by a block of cards, but the motion can be made identical to a normal shuffle.
2. You may also run more cards than five or fewer. However, the use of five cards is recommended in most cases, as it approximates the amount of time expended during a normal shuffle.
3. The second shuffle, during which the break is taken above the injog by the right thumb, begins immediately after the right hand has tossed its remaining half onto the left hand's cards (the action is a combination of tossing and placing).

## Controlling the Entire Deck: the Optical Shuffle

Don't be put off by the simple principle of this false shuffle. Trust me when I say that it can take in the most seasoned expert, if your spectator is not prepared for it. It may encourage you to know that Fred Kaps, one of the most famous magicians of the second half of the twentieth century, used this shuffle regularly. The underlying principle for this shuffle, as does the G.W. Hunter shuffle, dates back at least to the 1930s.<sup>3</sup> In the following description the usual shuffle action has been simplified to conform to standard overhand shuffle procedure, and several important fine points have been added to the basic shuffle, which make it all the more deceptive.



Place the deck in overhand shuffle position and, with your left thumb, pull off about half the cards.



A black and white line drawing of a hand holding a lit cigarette. The hand is shown from the side, with the thumb and index finger gripping the cigarette. A small flame is visible at the tip of the cigarette. The background is plain.

A black and white line drawing showing two hands holding a small, rectangular object with a grid-like texture. A small insect, possibly a fly, is perched on the object. The hands are positioned to hold the object from the sides and bottom. The entire illustration is enclosed in a rounded rectangular border.

If you throw the right hand's cards on top at the finish, the result is the same as that of giving the deck a single cut. If this is not desired, the right hand's cards can be thrown under the left hand's packet, or—even better—you can use the outjog technique described on page 4, then do a second optical shuffle, first drawing off all the cards above the outjogged block as the first shuffle action. This second shuffle returns the deck to its original order.

1. The whole secret lies in the rhythm. It is important that you move your right hand exactly as you would in a normal overhand shuffle. Always compare the normal shuffle and the optical false shuffle. As you practice, alternate them, first performing a normal shuffle, then a false one. Try to make

2. Sometimes the left thumb may accidentally pull off one of the right hand's cards. To avoid this, try using gentler shuffle actions, and hold the right hand's cards more firmly.



# MORE TRICKS WITH THE OVERHAND SHUFFLE

## Subconscious Poker

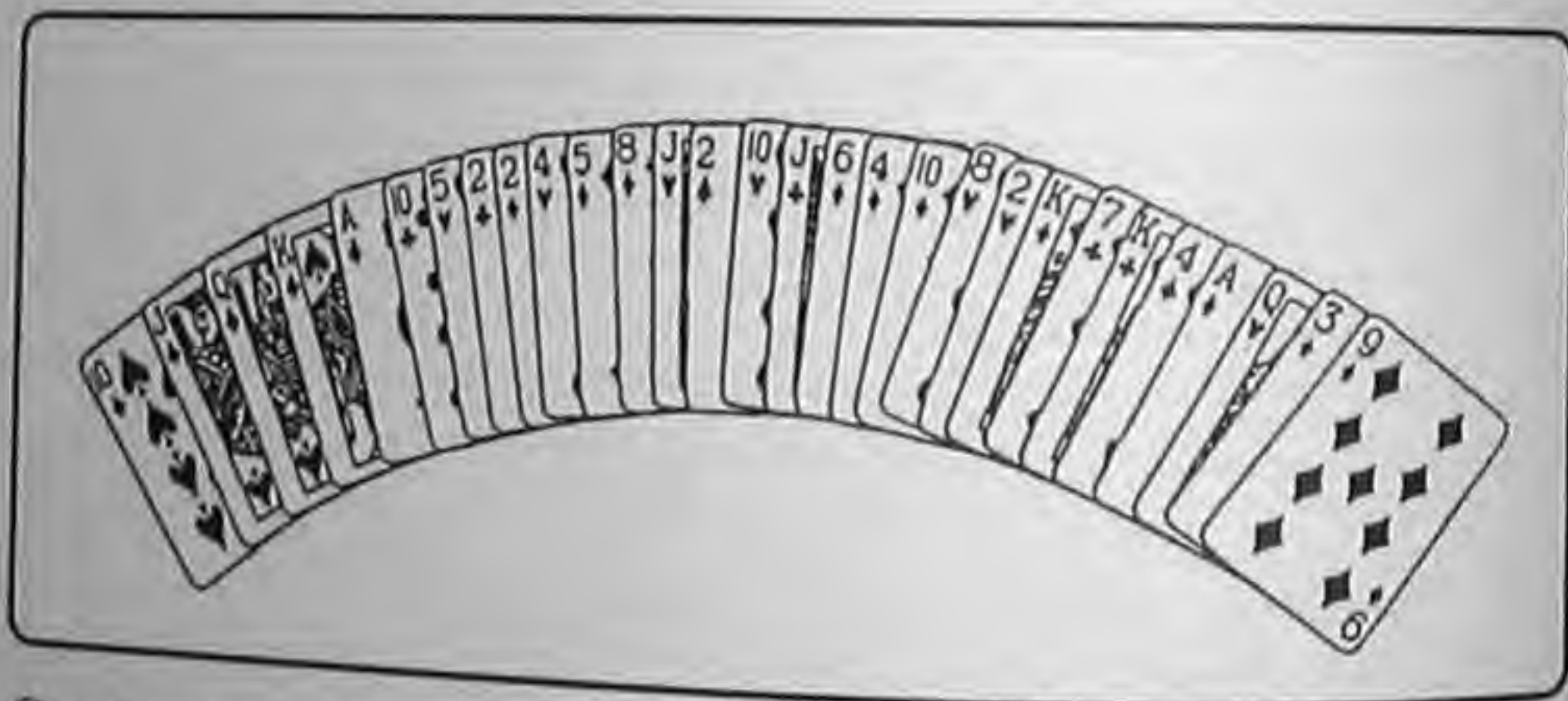
Although the framework for this routine is an actual game of poker, even spectators who know little or nothing about poker can understand and enjoy it. Despite the relative ease of execution, this trick can produce an impression of great skill. This trick is the creation of J. K. Schmidt, well-known illustrator and inventor of magic.<sup>4</sup> The underlying principle is Martin Gardner's, the respected American science-writer and amateur magician.<sup>6</sup>

### Effect

The performer deals five poker hands of five cards each. He displays the center card of the third hand (for example, the Queen of Spades) and explains that he will control the cards to return this one to the very same position in the next deal. After gathering up the cards and shuffling, he does exactly that—but he has also controlled the other cards in that hand to yield a royal flush in spades!

### Preparation

The five cards of the royal flush in spades are on top of the deck, in any order. This can be arranged during a preceding trick or prior to the performance. (The spread cull, taught in Volume 1, Chapter 13, page 187, can be used here to arrange the cards imperceptibly during performance.)



### Construction, Management and Script

Give the deck an overhand shuffle, placing any ten cards on top of the royal flush. It is best to break this into two pairs of shuffles, so that you need only run five cards each time. As you execute these shuffles, begin the presentation by explaining that you will demonstrate the skill necessary for a card cheat to earn his living by "influencing" a deck of cards.



"Let's take poker, for example, since most of you will know it. We'll play draw poker, with five players to make it more interesting." As you say this, deal out five hands of five cards each, as in standard draw poker.



Draw poker is a game that will be familiar to most of your spectators. At this point, the center card of each hand is one of the spades from the royal flush.

"I'm going to show you how a real cheat gives his luck a little boost. To do this, it's important that the card sharp always know which card is at which position. This is relatively easy with the top and bottom cards, which can often be peeked at unobtrusively. The same is true of the first and last hands dealt. Contrast that with the difficulty presented by this center hand and its center card." Pick up the third hand and turn it face up, spreading the cards in a fan on the table without altering their order. Naturally, the middle card is one of spades for the royal flush. For the purpose of this explanation, let's assume it is the Queen of Spades.



To create the strongest possible climax, you must draw attention to the indifferent cards in this poker hand. You might say something like "With a hand like this you'd lose the proverbial shirt off your back." Should you accidentally deal a relatively strong hand, you naturally draw attention to the fact. Leaving the Queen of Spades in the center of the hand, turn the five cards face down and pick up the hands on the table. The order in which the



hands are picked up is not important, so long as the center hand ends up in the center again. The most natural handling would probably be to pick up the cards with both hands and drop the resulting packet onto the deck. All this takes place as you speak to the audience, while only glancing at the cards casually. This gathering of the hands *must not* appear studied or calculated.

*"I shall now attempt not only to keep track of the Queen of Spades, but also to return it to the very same position it just occupied."* Make this statement as you give the deck a false shuffle (either an optical or injog shuffle) and false cut (Volume 1, Chapter 3, page 55, or this volume, Chapter 25, page 379) to maintain the positions of the top twenty-three cards. The cards are now arranged to deliver the royal flush in spades to the center hand.

Deal the five hands rapidly, but pause each time you reach the center hand and deal its card with your left hand only, slowly pushing it off the deck with the left thumb and letting it fall to the table. This is more dramatic than a regular deal and demonstrates that the cards really do come from the top of the deck.



Once the cards have been dealt, set the deck aside. Then slowly turn over the center card of the center hand—it is the Queen of Spades! Wait for the audience reaction to die down; then, as you turn over the other four cards in the hand, casually remark, *"And to make sure I win something, I have dealt myself the other four cards of the royal flush!"*

### Final Note

Scotland's Roy Walton suggests that any hand can be selected by a spectator at the start. Show the spade card in this hand as explained in the text. Then gather the hands in such a way that the chosen one becomes the center hand. With the cards as they are, the royal flush, with the memorized spade card in the middle, will fall on

the third hand. You may even let the spectator specify into which hand you will deal the memorized card. His answer dictates whether one or several cards must be added or removed from the top of the deck to position the card for the deal. This adjustment can be made with another overhand shuffle or with transfer cuts.



# Aces Off the Cuff

## *The Effect*

The magician magically produces the two black Aces from the deck, which he claims to keep invisibly on his sleeves. The black Aces then change visibly into the red Aces. To conclude, the black Aces are shaken out of the sleeves! This routine is based on a classic plot by Al Leech, "Two Hands: Four Aces".<sup>6</sup> To this I have introduced additional ideas by Edward Marlo,<sup>7</sup> Earl Nelson,<sup>8</sup> Richard Vollmer and myself.

## *Preparation*

The routine requires a six-card setup. The Ace of Spades is on top of the face-down deck, followed by forty-six indifferent cards, a red Ace, a face-up red Ace, a face-up indifferent card, the Ace of Clubs and, on the face of the deck, a final indifferent card.

Here is a quick way to accomplish this: Bring all four Aces to the face of the deck, pairing them by color and positioning the Ace of Spades on the face. Next place an indifferent card between the two red Aces and another between the two black Aces. Now spread the first five cards from the face of the deck into your right hand. Flip the rest of the deck sidewise and face down onto the right hand's five-card fan, while pushing the two face-up rear cards of the fan (a red Ace and an indifferent card) under the face-down deck. Flip the other three fanned cards (the Ace of Clubs, indifferent card and Ace of Spades) face down on top of the deck and cut the top two cards to the bottom. The deck is now set as required. (The inspiration for this system of setting up comes from Earl Nelson. Richard Vollmer suggested adding another indifferent card to the setup.)

## *Construction, Management and Script*

Ribbon spread the deck face up on the table to display fifty-two shuffled cards. Take care not to spread the final few cards, as you wish to keep the two reversed cards hidden. Gather the cards and turn them face down, holding the deck in left-hand dealing position.

"Often, when magicians perform with cards, they are accused of having the Aces up their sleeves. I can assure you that is not the case with me. I have them on my sleeves. You can't see them because they're face down." As you say this, casually false shuffle the deck, keeping the top and bottom stocks intact (page 254). Square the deck and return it to left-hand dealing position. As you say, "You can't see them because they're face down," slip cut (*Volume 1*, page 61) the top card to the center of the deck, taking a left little-finger break above it as your right hand replaces its packet onto the left hand's cards.

"Let me show you what I mean." With your right hand, cut off the packet above the break and display the card on its face; let's say it is the Four of Hearts. As soon as all attention is on this card, form a left little-finger break under the top card of the left hand's packet (the Ace of Spades).





"If I take a card, for example, the Four of Hearts—naturally it could be any card at all." Look at the Four, then at the spectators. As soon as you make eye contact with them, flip the left hand's cards face up with the help of the right hand's packet. However, as you prepare to do this, let the right hand's packet move over the left hand's for a split second, covering it, and pick up the Ace of Spades, adding it to the face of the right hand's cards. Immediately slip the right hand's packet beneath the right side of the left hand's cards and flip them over, sideways and face up, to display another indifferent card.

"If I rub the Four of Hearts on my sleeve..." Here you turn the face of the right hand's packet slightly toward yourself, so that you can look at it without exposing its face to the audience, and name the card previously displayed, though this card is now actually second from the face. This miscalling of the face card, if performed convincingly, can strengthen the upcoming transformation considerably. Rub the face of the right hand's packet lightly against the left sleeve, then display the Ace of Spades. As you bring the Ace forward, form a left little-finger break under the indifferent card at the face of the left hand's packet.



Look at the audience as you say, "Of course, that's just..." Place the right hand's packet face down onto the left hand's packet, stepped to the right, as you finish your sentence: "...the first Ace." As you say this, use your right hand to gesture, raising the index finger to indicate "one". Setting down the right hand's packet is treated as a secondary, intermediate action, apparently motivated by the right hand's gesture. "But I also have a second Ace..." you say as you raise the right middle finger to indicate "two". Immediately lower your right hand to grasp its packet, simultaneously shifting your gaze to the right sleeve as you complete your sentence: "...over here on this sleeve."

Raise your gaze to the audience again, as if to make sure that they have understood your statement. At the same time, with your palm-up right hand, grasp the right side of the right



hand's packet and flip it over sidewise onto the left hand's packet. Throughout all this you have maintained the left little finger's break under face card of its packet. Immediately grasp the upper packet and the card above the break in right-hand end grip while you simultaneously turn the left hand palm down with all the cards under the break and move the packet toward your right sleeve. As you do this, keep your right hand still.



In moving your left hand to the right, thumb count (*Volume 1*, page 197) three cards from the face of the packet and hold a left thumb break beneath them. This is concealed, since the thumb's side of the packet is turned away from the spectators as you make the count.

Lightly rub the face of the left hand's packet against your right sleeve, apparently to capture the Ace there. Transfer the left thumb break to the left little finger (*Volume 1*, page 198) as you turn your left hand palm up and move it forward. Both actions serve to cover the transfer of the break.



Display the two black Aces to the audience. In doing so, momentarily grip the right hand's packet at the tips of the left fingers and thumb, so that your right hand can turn palm up and regrip its packet by the ends from below. Having made this alteration in the right hand's grip, separate the packets again.

Turn to a woman in the audience: *"But perhaps you don't care for the black Aces. No problem. If I rub them together just a little, they change into the two red Aces."* With these words, turn your right hand palm down and rub the faces of the packets against each other. Initially, nothing happens, and you separate the packets to display both black Aces once more. Then rub them together again and this time smoothly transfer the three cards above the left little-finger break to the face of the right hand's packet. Separate the packets again to show that the black Aces have changed into red Aces. When you do this, try to make it appear as if the aces never touch, but only hover over each other.

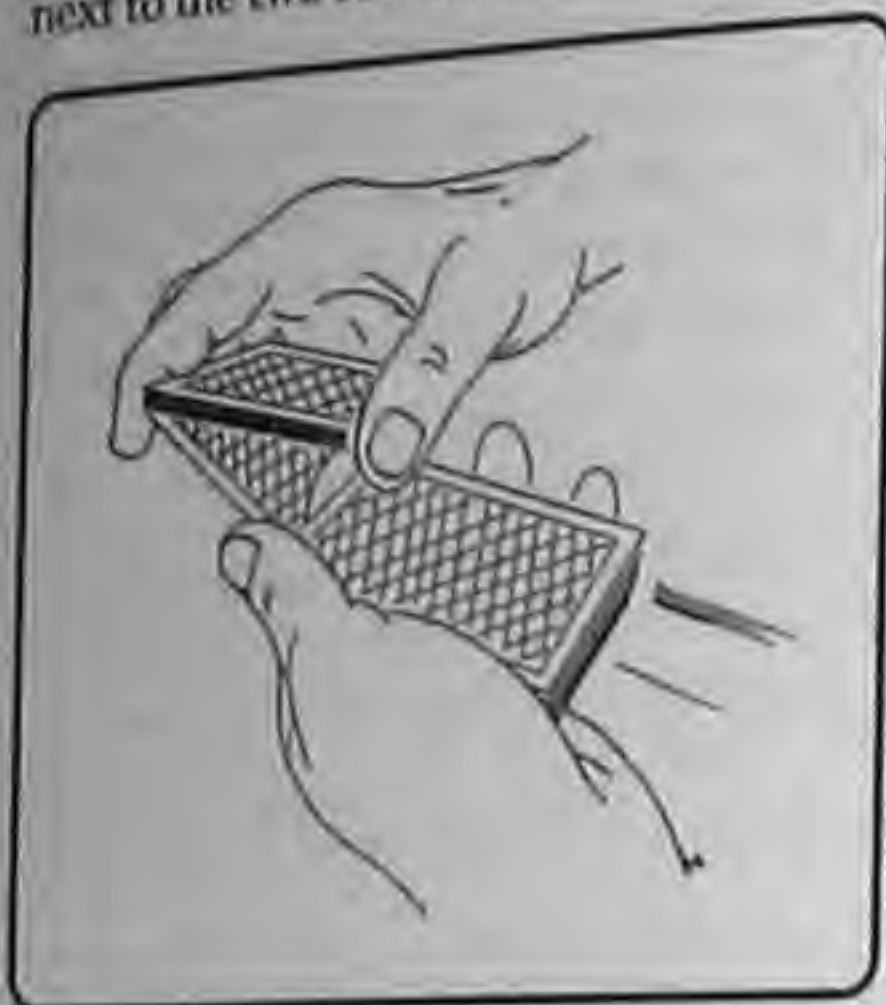
Adjust the right hand's packet from end grip to dealing grip, so that both hands' packets are held in face-up dealing position. Then push off the two red Aces with the thumbs and toss them onto the table. The spectators will now see an indifferent card on the face of each packet.

*"Perhaps you're wondering where the black Aces went."* Put your thumbs under their packets and turn them face down. Place the right hand's packet under the left's and square the deck, taking it into left-hand dealing position.

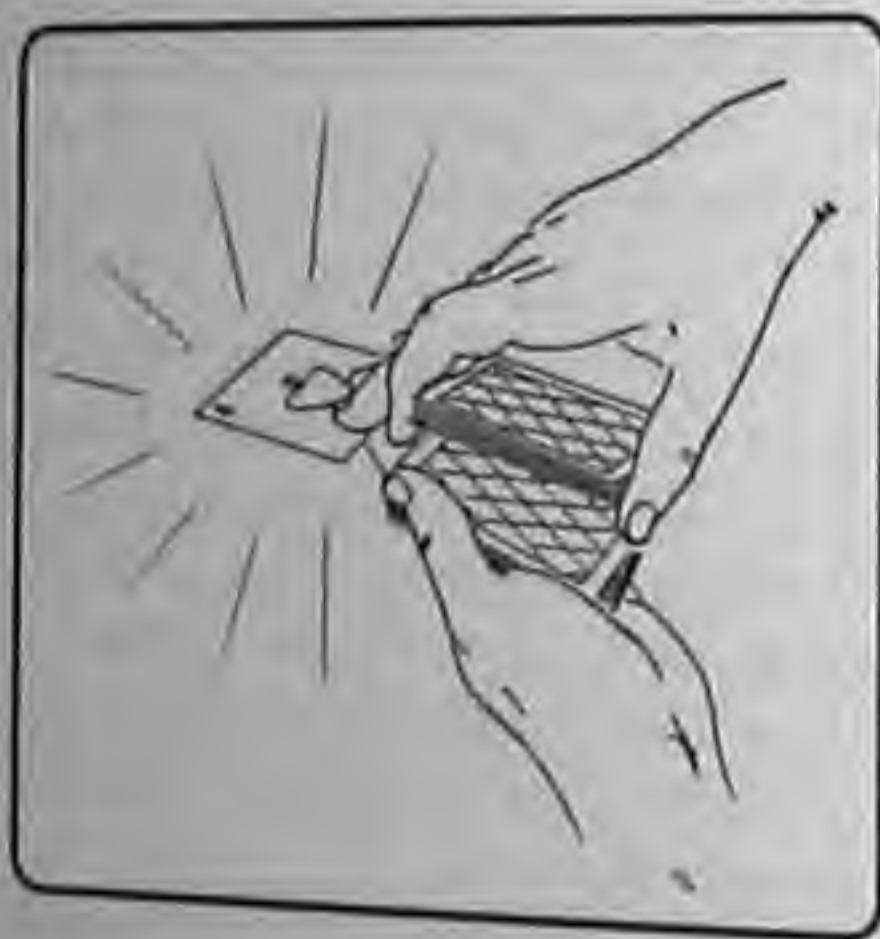
*"In the sleeve, of course, not on the sleeve, but inside it. Look, here's the first one already."*



As you say this, buckle the bottom two cards with the left index finger (*Volume 1*, page 212) and take a left little-finger break above them. Bring your right hand over the deck, taking it into end grip while transferring the break to the right thumb. With the right index finger, swing cut the upper half of the deck to the left, depositing it into the left hand (*Volume 1*, page 27), then place it beneath the right hand's cards. The instant the left hand's cards go under the right's packet, transfer the bottom two cards of the right hand's packet to the top of the left hand's packet and immediately turn the left hand palm down with its cards. Make an outward shaking motion as if you were shaking something from your left sleeve. Pause briefly, then turn your left hand palm up to display the Ace of Clubs. Place it next to the two red Aces on the table.



*"You mustn't to shake too hard—or it will jump out."* The right hand's packet is still in end grip. Curl the outer phalanges of the right middle and ring fingers onto the face of their packet and slide the bottom card to the right, much as if you were going the glide (*Volume 1*, page 121). Doing this causes the bottom card to spring off the thumb at the inner left corner, forming a V-shaped opening at the back. Immediately push the left middle, ring and little fingers into this opening, causing the separated card to flip face up with the aid of the right middle and ring fingers.



The Ace of Spades is now held between the middle fingers of both hands. This very surprising and visual production of the final Ace is my handling variant of a clever idea by American magician J. K. Hartman, which he calls "the popover move".<sup>9</sup>

## CHAPTER 18

### PALMING

*"Most magicians...consider the palm an easy move to make and are inclined to believe that they are 'getting away with it' when they are only fortunate enough to have a polite audience."*

Dai Vernon





*Palming* is the secret concealment of an object in the hand, whether it be in the palm proper or elsewhere, including on the back of the hand. The palming techniques described in this chapter can be used in most of the tricks requiring a palm.

# Theoretical Considerations

Palming is one of the most difficult techniques in card magic. Many budding magicians avoid it because the palmed object must be concealed in the hand for an extended period and they are afraid of being caught "red-handed". But if you understand the technique of palming, practice it assiduously and apply it with understanding, you will have at your disposal one of the most powerful of sleights.

Palming may be divided into several phases. I'll discuss them here to familiarize you with the concept of palming. These phases will be part of the technical description, without being individually emphasized.

**FIRST PHASE—THE PREPARATION:** Some palming techniques require you to prepare the card or cards for palming; for example, by obtaining a break beneath them.

**SECOND PHASE—THE MOTIVATION:** The hand in which the cards are to be palmed must come into contact with them. This requires an outward motivation that will seem both logical and consistent with the procedure of the trick being performed. You might, perhaps, use your right hand to grasp the deck to square it or to pass it to a spectator.

**THIRD PHASE—THE PALM:** Here one or more cards are secretly placed or taken into the hand. This is the actual palming technique. This is where most magic textbooks begin their technical description of palming methods.

**FOURTH PHASE—THE REMOVAL:** The hand which has palmed the card or cards moves away from the location where the palming occurred. The motivation and priority of actions must be clearly understood.

**FIFTH PHASE—THE CONCEALMENT:** The palmed cards are concealed in the hand for a certain period. You must know what you can and cannot do with this hand and what you should be thinking, to avoid communicating any sense of guilt.

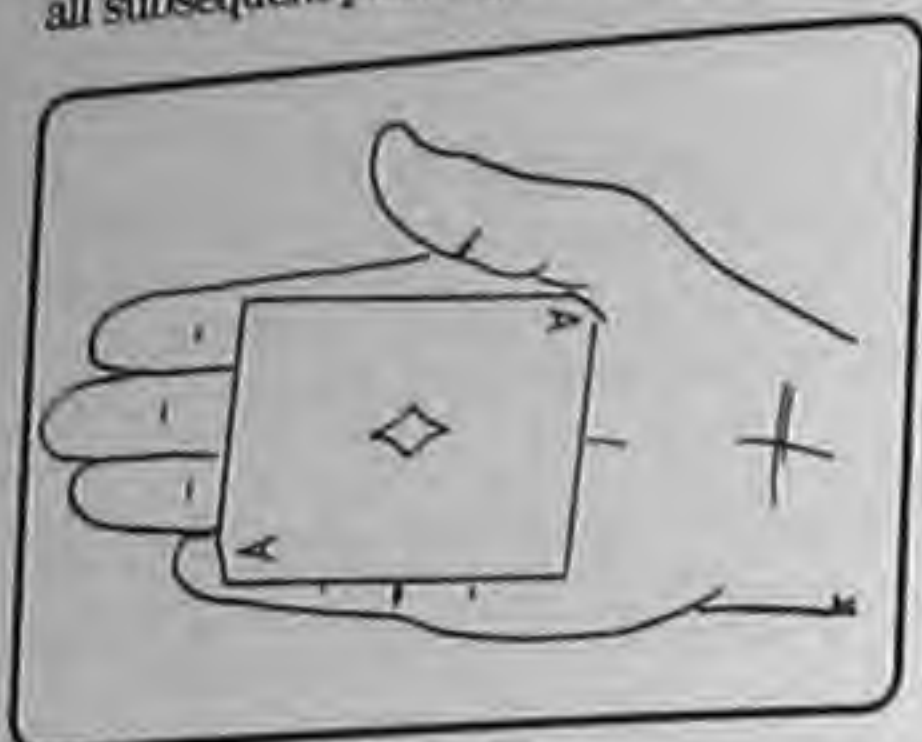
**SIXTH PHASE—THE REPLACEMENT:** The palmed cards are generally replaced on top of the deck or on top of another packet of cards. Here you must consider which technique is best suited for the situation at hand.

This formulation of phases was analyzed and articulated by the brilliant Spanish card-expert Arturo de Ascanio.



# The Palm Grip

Before you learn how to palm one or more cards undetectably from the deck, you must be able to hold a card concealed in your hand. Mastery of this technique is prerequisite for all subsequent palming techniques.



Place a card against the palm-side of your right hand. You will hold the card in place by diagonal pressure exerted between the pad of your little finger and the base of your thumb. Hold your index, middle and ring fingers open, relaxed and together, beside the little finger. The diagonal pressure prevents the hand from appearing cramped. Take care that your thumb lies alongside the hand and does *not* stick out like a fish hook (a frequently encountered flaw).

After some experience, you may change the pressure points to make your hand appear more free and active. Of course, the hand is not held stiff as a board; instead its fingers are slightly curled. The illustration is only intended to display the pressure points.

## Check Points

1. First you must become accustomed to the feeling of holding a card palmed in your hand. Take every opportunity to hold a palmed card. Carry out various actions while the hand palms the card: Shuffle the deck, hold or move objects (glasses, bottles, etc.), use the telephone and so on. After a while you will hardly feel the card; sometimes you'll even forget that it's there. Now you are ready to study the palming techniques that follow.
2. Don't worry about natural gaps between your fingers, sometimes called "windows", through which the palmed card is visible. Almost every hand has such windows. After you've practiced a while, your fingers will adjust and fit together so that no gaps will be visible.
3. An often heard complaint is that one's hand is too small. This is almost always merely an excuse. Adult hands too small to palm cards are rare. It is simply a question of technique.



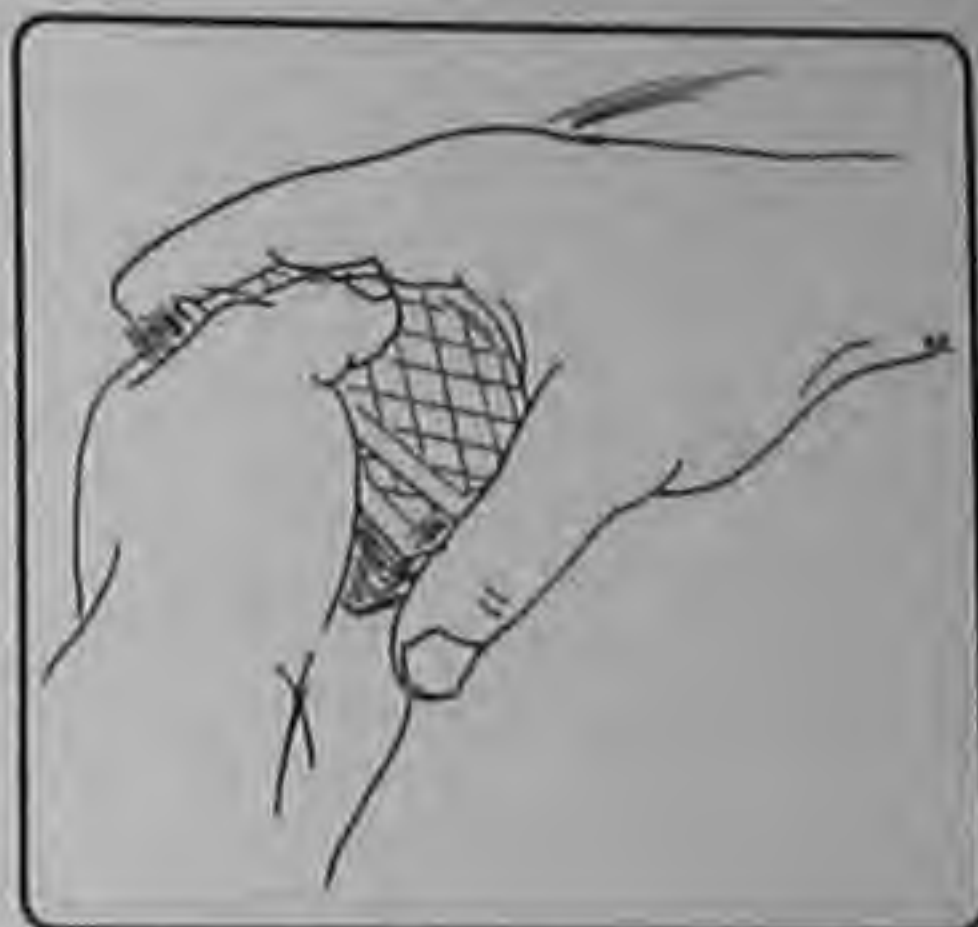
## The Top Palm

This technique will place the top card of the deck into your right palm as both hands square the deck. This method and handling were first described in print by the legendary card expert Dai Vernon.<sup>10</sup> Although it was developed many years ago, it remains the best method for palming a card off the top of the deck.

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. The cards are slightly unsquared, as though they had just been dribbled into your left hand. Your left thumb rests naturally on top of the deck.



Bring your right hand over the deck, assuming end-grip position, apparently to square the cards. Move your left index finger under the deck to enable your right fingers to grasp it by the outer end. The pad of your left index finger is very near the outer index of the bottom card. Push the top card *outward to the right with diagonal pressure from your left thumb*. The outer end of the top card pivots slightly to the right on the axis created by the fold of the outermost joint of your right middle finger. This push takes place the instant the right hand grasps the deck, and there is no visible motion of your left thumb.



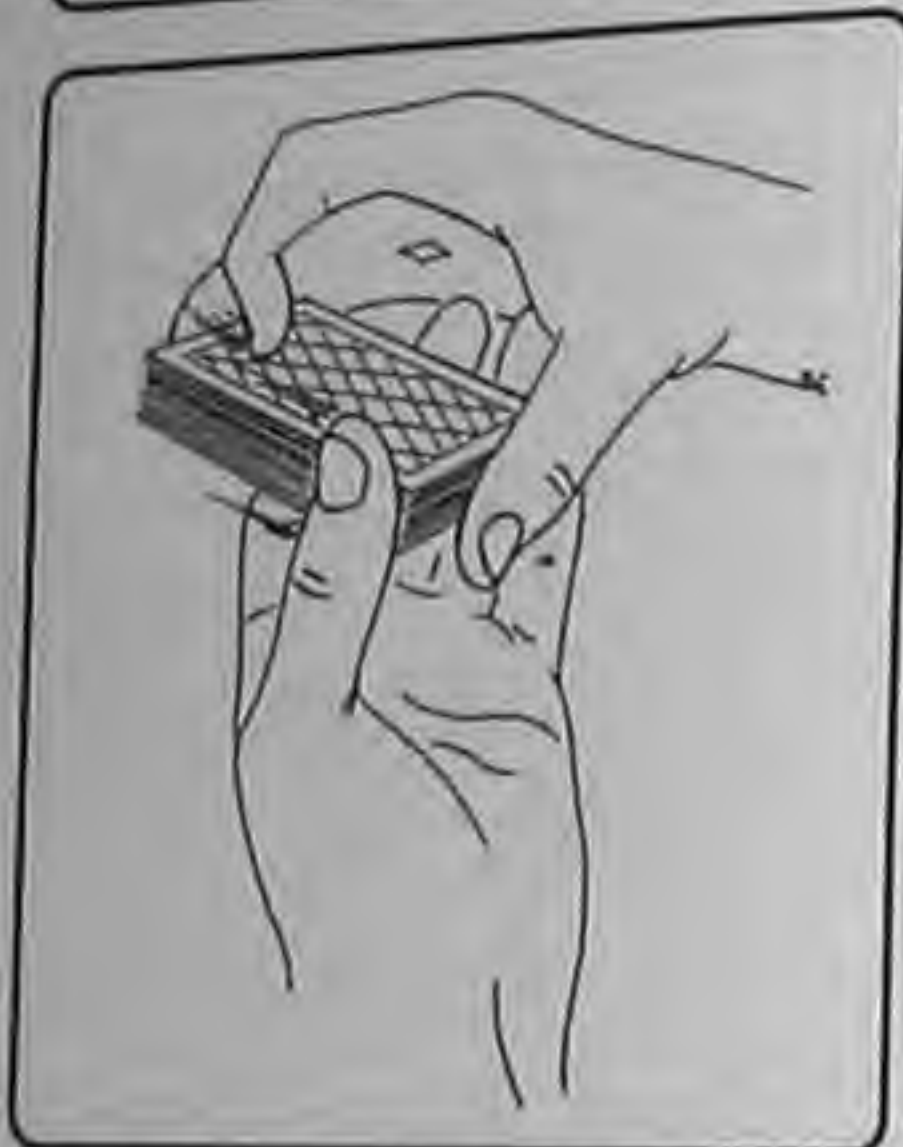
Bring the pad of your right little finger into contact with the outer right corner of the top card and press down lightly on the corner. This will cause the inner end of the card to rise partially into your right palm. There must be no visible motion of your fingers at the outer end. It's important that the outer phalanges of the right middle, ring and little fingers do not curl. The pressure required can be exerted without any visible motion.







In an unbroken continuation of action, lift the deck with your right hand to elevated dealing position (*Volume 1*, page 18). As you do this, the left side of the deck rides along the inside of your left thumb until it comes to rest at the thumb's pad. Meanwhile, your left index finger is curled under the deck, exerting light upward pressure with its fingernail against the deck. The right side of the deck has been at your left fingertips from the outset, so that side acts like a pivot during the lifting. As you lift the deck, press the tips of your left middle and ring fingers against the face of the top card, pushing it completely into your right palm. Here this phase is shown just before completion.



Finally, curl the outer phalanx of your right index finger inward as your left middle and ring fingers continue to press the card into your right palm. Slide your left thumb and fingers forward and back several times along the sides of the deck to simulate a squaring action, while the nail of the index finger slides back and forth along the bottom of the deck. You can now also square the ends of the deck with your right hand.



Finally, take control of the deck with your right hand, placing it on the table or handing it to a spectator for shuffling. The illustration shows a view from the side. Note that the outer phalanx of the index finger is curled on top of the deck. This creates the impression that the hand is empty. The illustration shows the hand from an exposed angle in which the index corner of the palmed card is clearly visible. To guard against this danger, imagine that your right index finger forms a line, and direct this line toward the right ear of the leftmost spectator. This will give you perfect cover for the palmed card.



### Check Points

1. You should have a clear picture of the handling as you wish the spectator to see it: You are holding the deck in your left hand. You lift the deck with your right hand to your left fingertips to square it. Finally, you hand the deck to a spectator with your right hand, or lower it to left-hand dealing position. The execution of the sleight must be adapted to conform precisely to this external reality.
2. When the card is being pushed over slightly by the left thumb in the second phase, it merely pivots about the axis at the outer end—it is *not* pushed straight to the right. In fact, your left thumb pushes the card outward against the right middle finger more than it does to the right.
3. During the actual palming, your right thumb remains motionless at the inner end of the deck near the inner left corner. You must absolutely resist the beginner's urge to lift and hook the thumb inward—no purpose would be served by doing so anyway.
4. You can also use your left hand, rather than your right, to give out the deck. When the left hand grasps the deck at its left side to remove it from the right hand, take care to move the left hand and deck forward for a split second before allowing your right hand to fall to your side or to rest on the table.
5. Keep your right hand relaxed and arched over the deck. Don't try to provide cover or facilitate the pivoting of the card into the palm by rotating or lifting your right hand at the wrist—the hand should remain motionless, appearing merely to grasp the deck. Once you have mastered this technique, it will look and feel as though the card simply floats into your palm.
6. Initially, you will feel an urge to move the right elbow out to the right. Resist this urge. During the palming, both arms should be relaxed and motionless in an almost horizontal plane. If you are performing while seated, your forearms may rest on the table.



# Palming Multiple Cards from the Top

This technique will allow you to palm several cards from the top undetectably and simultaneously. The action, as perceived by the spectator, is the same as that just described in the preceding top palm. The deck will be lifted to the left fingertips by your right hand to square it, and is finally given to a spectator or placed on the table. Let's assume that the four Aces are on top and are to be palmed in your right hand.



Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and form a left little-finger break under the top four cards, inserting its outer phalanx into the break so that the back of the phalanx contacts the four separated cards at their inner end near the inner right corner.

The break can be obtained with a little finger count (*Volume 1*, page 201) or by spreading and then squaring up the deck. (Also see the method used to get ready for the double lift in *Volume 1*, page 129).



Bring your right hand over the deck, apparently to square it, and take the deck into end grip. At the same time, extend your left little finger about an inch to the right, causing the top four cards to pivot to the right against your right middle finger.

Immediately press the right little finger against the outer right corner of the top four cards, causing them to spring partially up into your right palm. Grasp the deck with your right middle finger and thumb and lift it to your left fingertips, apparently squaring its sides by sliding it forward and backward several times. In the action of lifting the deck, use your left middle and ring fingers to help push the top cards into the palm, then curl the outer phalanx of the right index finger inward to give your hand a more natural appearance. Conclude the sleight by placing the deck onto the table or hand it to a spectator.



The only difference between this technique and the palming of a single card is the use of the break to assure that the desired number of cards are palmed. This aside, all other points concerning the palming of a single card apply as well to multiple cards.

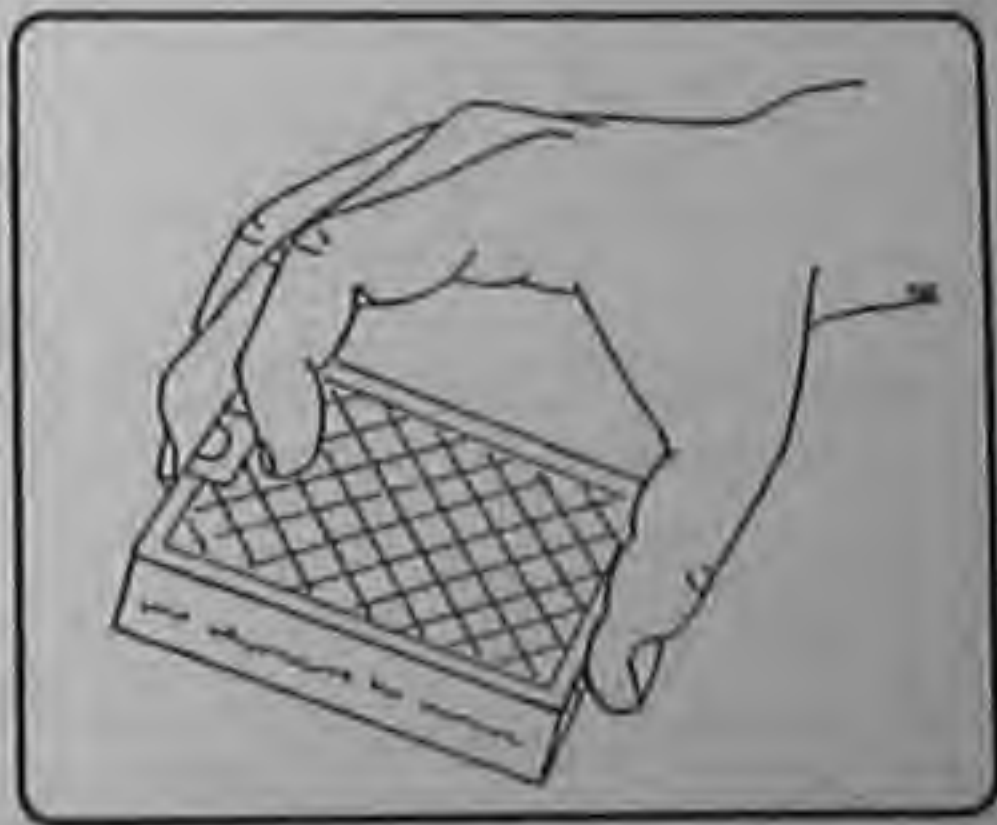
## Concealing Palmed Cards in the Hand

What do you do with the hand that is palming one card or several? This, for many, is the sore point of palming. They say to themselves, "*Now everyone will see that I'm palming a card.*" In this section I'll give you many suggestions regarding the natural use of the hand when palming cards. For the sake of explanation, we will assume that the cards are palmed in your right hand.

One of the most obvious and correspondingly natural uses of the hand is to hold the deck. Note how the curled outer phalanx of the right index finger helps to create the impression that the hand is empty.

The deck can be grasped by the sides, as well as by the ends. Normally, gripping it by the ends is more direct and natural.

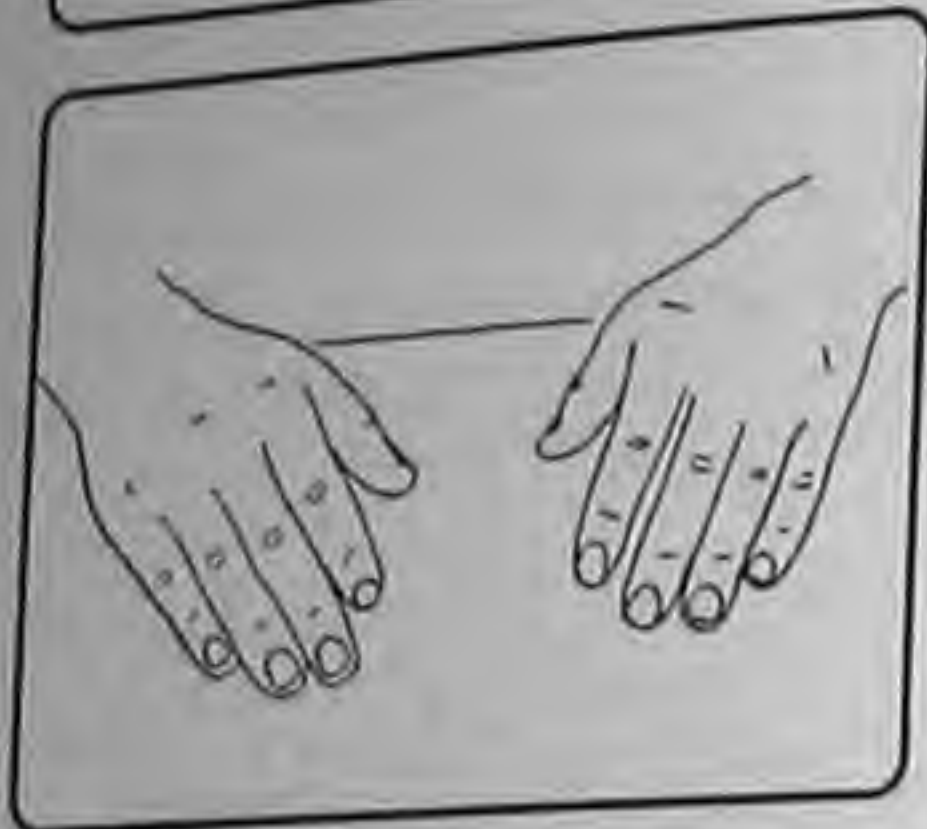
The same hand position may be used to hold the card case or any object of similar size; for example, a pack of cigarettes.



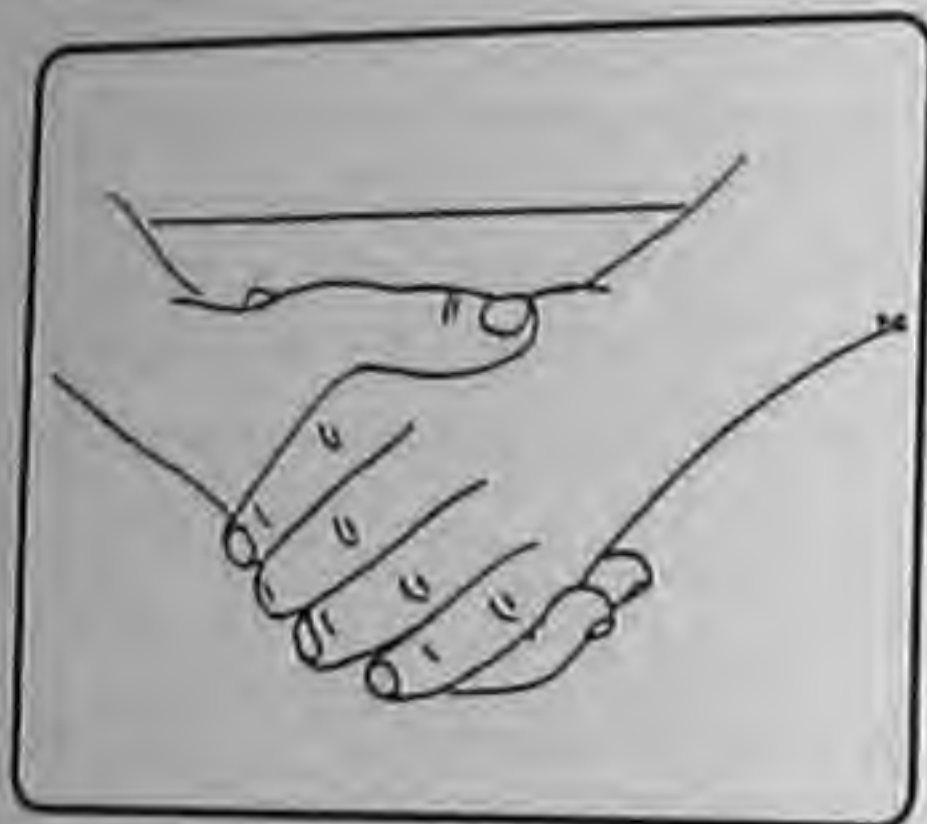




Place your hand on the table. Normally you would curl in your fingers in doing this, so that the nails of the middle, ring and little fingers contact the tabletop. This will bend the outer right corner of the card in sharply. But if you don't need to replace the card on the deck, you are often able to straighten the card out before it is displayed. If, for example, you are going to produce the palmed card from your pocket, the bend can quickly be straightened in the pocket just before the card is removed. This illustration shows a view from the front, as do the next two.



This position doesn't bend the card, but can only be maintained for a few seconds because of its slightly unnatural appearance. However, this will be sufficient for many applications. In this case, the card is maintained in the palm through inward pressure of the outer joint of the slightly curled right index finger. The middle, ring and little fingers are extended and do not grip the card.



Clasp your hands together. This method is particularly useful when you're performing surrounded, and can be used when either standing or seated. But don't maintain the position for more than three seconds or it will begin to appear cramped and unnatural.

If you wear glasses you can adjust their position, either by using your slightly extended index finger to push back on the bridge over your nose, or by grasping the right temple (arm) between your thumb and index finger and pushing back.



Adjust your tie, holding the knot with your right hand and pulling on the tie with your left. You can also reverse the hands' roles, using your right to pull on the tie and your left to hold the knot, which will position the palming hand farther from your face.



Hold a glass, a bottle, an ashtray or some other round object with the hand palming the cards.



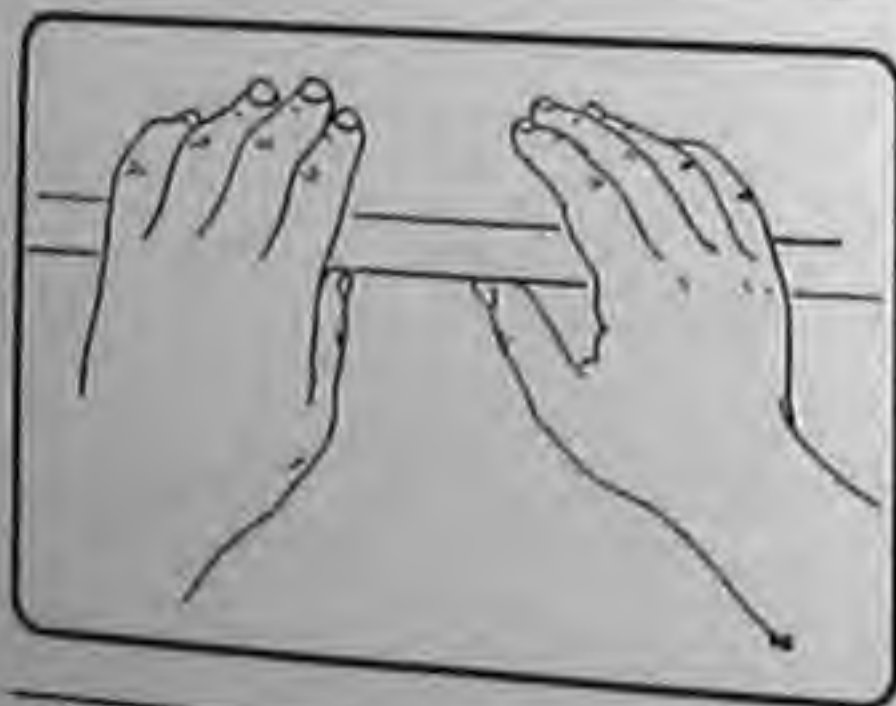




Place both hands on your hips, or just the palming hand on one hip. This can be done either with the fingers in front, thumb in back or thumb in front, fingers in back.



Place the palming hand on your upper thigh. This position is particularly suitable when you are seated at a low table, although you can also use it when seated at a normal table if you push back your chair and let both hands rest on your upper thighs.



Rest your hand on the edge of the table. If there are viewers on the left, the left hand can provide cover by resting on top of the right hand. This is also a common and, consequently, a natural pose.

Support yourself by placing both hands at the sides of the table as you lean forward. Public speakers often grasp a podium in this fashion.



Pull back on the left sleeve, while saying something like *"And, of course, there is nothing up my sleeve."*



With both hands, grasp the lapels of your jacket and pull it slightly open. This can be done as a gesture to show that there is nothing in the jacket. Or you could just open the right side of the jacket, to reach in with your left hand and remove something (a pen, a wallet) from your inner right breast pocket.







Simulate an overhand shuffle with an imaginary deck. Pay attention during this to the spectators' lines of sight, as your right hand must move up and down to make this appear natural. The illustration shows a view from the front.



Hold your right hand open and palm down, parallel to the floor, as you remark, "*I first performed this trick when I was just this big.*" This amusing ploy was given to me by the accomplished French card-conjurer Daniel Rhod.

If you can do so without appearing vain, you can absentmindedly stroke back your hair; but please, only attempt this if you have hair. If you are bald, you can scratch your head.



Pull back the left sleeve in order to look at your watch. One possible comment: *"Please don't shuffle for more than three seconds. Otherwise you'll make the trick too difficult."* (How true!)







Let your hand hang at your side. The arm should swing slightly, but please don't exaggerate this motion. Watch the rate at which your arm falls when no cards are palmed and note the size and duration of the swings until it comes to rest. The tendency when palming is to make it fall more slowly than is natural.

### Check Points

1. As mentioned earlier, most of these "covers" should last only three to five seconds. If prolonged they tend to draw attention to themselves and arouse suspicion.
2. If you employ several of these methods in succession, you can comfortably extend the palming phase for as long as ten seconds. Normally two to four of these methods strung together are sufficient. After this period you will either replace the card on the deck or transfer it to another location.
3. Do the methods described fit your style? This is critical, since naturalness is always subjective. It is generally difficult to say whether one method is more natural than another, and therefore inconspicuous. Study your own movements and use these as your cover. But be sure to avoid those positions that impose a barrier through their body language between you and your audience; for example, folding your arms while supporting them on the tabletop. Such a stance only suggests that you are hiding something.
4. Don't look at the hand that is palming the card. Look at the audience or at the actions of your other hand.
5. As the hand that does the palming is moved away from the deck, avoid moving it more slowly than normal. It should always conform to the natural pace of the situation, which will normally mean moving it somewhat more quickly than your intuition would suggest. This important concept was formulated by Dai Vernon.
6. You must feel good when you are palming a card. If the act gives you a guilty conscience, the only known remedy is practice, practice and more practice. Practice until you no longer notice the palmed card.



7. A practice tip: Palm a card as often as possible during performances not requiring it; for example, when you place the deck on the table or hand it to a spectator for shuffling. As with the classic force (*Volume 1*, page 217), this will give you the experience and confidence you will need to carry out the

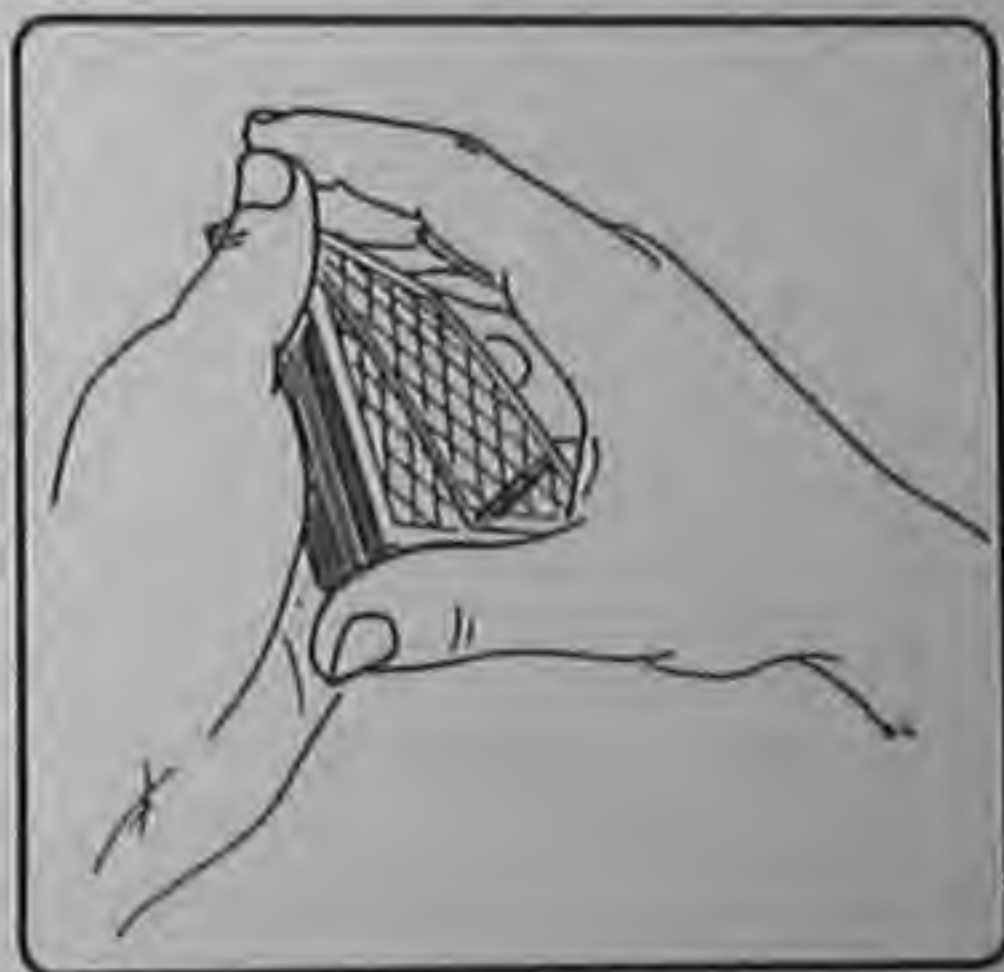
sleight when it is required. If you are caught, the damage is minimized, since the palmed card has nothing to do with the effect. You can simply replace the card in the deck, saying, "I just wanted to see if you were paying attention. What you are about to see is not a feat of prestidigitation, but pure magic."

## Replacing Palmed Cards

If you are not going to produce the palmed card from a pocket, wallet or some other location where it has been secretly introduced, you will need to return it to the deck or to a packet of cards.

Let's consider the case where the palmed card will be replaced on the deck. You must have an obvious reason for your hand to approach the deck and this should generally not require verbal justification (although in some cases this can be a possibility). More than anything else, the handling should be intrinsically meaningful. Each situation will offer several possibilities, which will be discussed in context. Let's assume that the card is palmed in the right hand and is to be replaced on the deck, which is either on the table or in left-hand dealing position.

**FIRST METHOD:** Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and bring your right hand over the deck to take it into end grip. A common mistake seen when palmed cards are replaced is the shooting of the right thumb out like a hook. To avoid this, move your right thumb in a small arc along the heel of your left thumb until it can contact the inner end of the deck. During this action, the palmed cards fall onto the deck, which the right hand immediately lifts to elevated dealing position (*Volume 1*, page 18). Curl in your right index finger as in the standard end grip, preventing a possible warp in the palmed cards from being seen. Simultaneously, square the deck along the sides with your left fingers. This squaring action provides justification for the right hand to grasp the deck.







**SECOND METHOD:** Proceed as in the previous replacement, but extend your left thumb across the top of the deck, pressing the palmed cards firmly against the top. Then, with your right middle and ring fingers, riffle the outer ends of the cards lightly to provide additional cover. The riffling action justifies the right hand's having grasped the deck.



**THIRD METHOD:** The deck lies face down on the table with one end pointed toward you. Place your right hand on the deck and ribbon spread the cards from left to right, secretly adding the palmed cards under cover of this action.



**FOURTH METHOD:** With your right hand, grasp the deck in end grip and pivot it side-wise and face up along the axis formed by your right middle finger and thumb. As you begin and carry out this turnover, reach with your left middle and ring fingers for the right side of the palmed cards and pull the cards out of the palm and onto the deck. Keep your right hand motionless and your right thumb in constant contact with the inner end of the deck. Remember that your right hand doesn't move onto the deck; rather the deck revolves under the palmed cards, picking them up as it turns.



**FIFTH METHOD:** Grasp the deck in right-hand end grip and hold it there as your left hand leaves the cards briefly to gesture or move some object on the table. Then resume left-hand dealing grip, and, as the hands move the deck toward the table, add the palmed cards to the deck as in Method Four. Without hesitation, use both hands to tap the end of the deck square on the table top; or use just the left hand, while you gesture with your right hand.



**SIXTH METHOD:** The deck lies face down on the table with one end turned toward you. Bring your right hand over the deck to square it. As soon as you contact the deck with the outer phalanges of your right fingers, spread your index and little fingers, placing them along the left and right sides of the deck respectively. The deck is then squared along the sides by pressure between your index and little fingers, and along the ends by pressure between the heel of your thumb and middle and ring fingers.



### Check Points

1. Train your audience to look you in the eyes. Don't look at the deck when replacing the cards; look at the audience and make an interesting remark that will hold their attention. A direct question to one of the spectators is always effective in such cases.
2. Every natural action that flows from the circumstances of the trick or from your own manner of expression offers possibilities for the replacement of palmed cards. Analyze the structure of the trick and study your movements while performing it. These will suggest numerous variations on the techniques described.
3. There is a tendency, once the card has been palmed for a while, to ditch it as quickly as possible. Don't accelerate your natural rhythm if it is not motivated by the action of the trick.
4. Let me emphasize again that there must be an overt motivation for moving the hand that conceals the cards to the deck, and this motivation should be obvious to your audience *before* the action takes place.



# TRICKS WITH PALMING

## Homing Card Plus

This classic trick is a modified version of "Homing Card", the classic effect by Francis Carlyle and Jimmy Grippo, two American past masters.<sup>11</sup> It is certainly one of the most effective of all tricks for laymen. Practice it conscientiously and it will take a prominent place in your active repertoire. It is an outstanding example of how palming techniques can be rendered invisible with the application of proper misdirection.

### Effect

A card signed by a spectator magically travels under test conditions from the deck to the performer's previously empty pocket, not once, but twice in succession. At the end of the routine, the whole deck migrates to the pocket, with the exception of a single card—the spectator's signed selection!

### Construction, Management and Script

Pass the deck to someone for shuffling and cutting, then take it back in left-hand dealing position. *"One thing is particularly important in this trick: Please make sure that this pocket is absolutely empty."*



As you say this, pull out the lining of your outer right jacket-pocket and have a spectator confirm that the pocket is indeed empty. To facilitate the spectator's examination, it is natural for you to turn somewhat to your left and bring your right hand over the deck, which you grasp in end grip. Under cover of the misdirection afforded by your request that your pocket be checked, you form a left little-finger break under the top two cards. Then, while the inspection is carried out, you palm the two cards in your right hand. As you do this, keep your eyes on the spectator examining the lining of your pocket. This is natural, since someone is handling your clothing. It also lays the psychological foundation for loading the palmed cards in the pocket.

To make the emptiness of the pocket (and your misdirection) even more compelling, it is good to have one or two items initially in the pocket. Taking these out of the pocket before you pull out the lining implies that the pocket is empty. In addition, it's more natural to have something in the pocket at the outset. After all, that's what pockets are for.



Turn back to face your audience. *"May I ask one of you to please take a card from this deck?"* As you say this, use your right hand to tuck the pocket lining back inside the pocket while unobtrusively leaving the two palmed cards in the pocket. If you perform this with self assurance and without guilt, no suspicions will be aroused. At the same time your hand is going into the pocket, you turn your head back to look at the audience, directing your gaze across the route of the right hand—strong misdirection (as Tony Slydini and Juan Tamariz have so amply demonstrated over the years)!



Have someone take a card and sign its face. Use a broad-tipped, permanent marker. I prefer one with dark green ink, as the writing is then clearly visible on both red and black cards (a tip I received from Carlhorst Meier). If a face card is chosen, have the spectator sign it along the white border, so that it can later be identified instantly by everyone. Have the card replaced in the deck and control it to the top using one of the methods in Chapter 4 (*Volume 1*, page 65).

*"Your card will now travel up my left sleeve, across my upper torso—that's the part from here on up—and into my outer right jacket-pocket."* While saying this, hold the deck in right-hand end grip and dribble the cards into your left hand. Leave the deck there in a somewhat unsquared state. Then extend your left arm to the left and make a corresponding "traveling motion" with your body, using your right hand to trace the imaginary path of the card.







*"That always tickles a bit, but I like it."* Reach in the pocket with your clearly empty right hand and take out one of the cards there. Hold it with its back to the audience as you look at its face. *"You have a signature like my doctor—it's practically illegible."* This statement strengthens the assumption that this is the signed card, and should be delivered in a light humorous fashion, so as not to insult your helper. You never wish to do anything to harm rapport with your spectators.



Replace the card in the side pocket and direct your attention to the spectator: *"Name your card in a loud, clear voice."* Under cover of the misdirection afforded by this direct instruction, place your right hand on the unsquared deck and square it, palming off the top card. Do this casually, as you look at the audience.

As soon as the spectator has named the selection, reach into your pocket and remove the signed card.

Have the spectator verify the signature; then continue: *"Normally a magician will only perform a trick once for the same audience. This is because, in the first performance, everyone is watching what he does, while in a second they are watching how he does it. For this reason, there are very few magicians in the entire world who can repeat a trick on the same occasion for the same audience. Ladies and gentlemen, I shall now perform this trick for you a second time."* If you say this with the proper emphasis and timing, it not only elicits laughter, but justifies repeating the trick.

You explain, *"You will be able to follow the precise path of the card as it dashes up my sleeve, crosses my upper torso and lands in my pocket."* Illustrate your words by moving



the signed card along the purported path, finally placing it face down in your pocket. Place it behind the two indifferent cards in your pocket, so that it is the innermost card, and as you finish your explanation, remove the outermost indifferent card from your pocket. Naturally, you hold this card with its back to the audience, who assume it to be the spectator's signed card.

Place this card in the deck, which you still hold in your left hand. Riffle the deck and look expectantly at the audience. *"Did you see it? Done already!"* Discreetly show the right hand empty in a passing gesture and tap it against the outside of your pocket. *"You can even feel that it's arrived."* Reach into the pocket with the fingertips and remove the innermost card. It is the spectator's signed selection again!

Before the applause dies down, speak somewhat loudly over it, saying, *"Although there are only a few magicians who will perform a trick a second time, there is only one who will perform a trick a third time. Ladies and gentlemen, I will now perform this trick yet again!"* Replace the card in the deck, executing the diagonal insertion (Volume 1, page 69) to take a left little-finger break above it. Control the card to the bottom of the deck. The one-card middle pass (Volume 1, page 77) is an efficient method, although an over-hand shuffle or triple cut will also do the job. The spectators must be certain that the card is still in the deck.

Riffle the deck, implying that the third migration has taken place. Look meaningfully at a female spectator to your right, saying, *"I know you don't believe it. Reach into my pocket yourself."* When she does so, she feels a card there. *"Do you feel something? Yes? Please slowly remove the card from the pocket and show it to everyone."* As you say this, use your left index finger to buckle the bottom card of the deck, and take a left little-finger break above this card (the selection). Turn your right side toward the spectator and raise your right arm, to facilitate her removal of the card. This brings your right hand over the deck in a natural manner. Grasp all the cards above the break in a kind of palm. I say "a kind of palm" because you can't palm the entire deck perfectly unless you are blessed with huge hands. But that is irrelevant here. What is important is that you grasp the deck without hesitating.

In the very instant the spectator displays the card from your pocket to the others, look at the audience and reach with your right hand into your right pocket. The audience will deny that the card displayed by the spectator is the signed selection. Let the deck fall into the pocket and remove one card. *"Well then, you must have taken out the wrong card. Was it this one?"* Show the indifferent card and let it fall onto the table. *"Or this?"* Take out another card. *"Or one of these?"* Bring out a pair of cards, gradually increasing your pace, and eventually bring out the balance of the deck on the fourth or fifth trip to the pocket. Fan the deck and let the cards fall to the table.







*"The entire deck has traveled to my pocket.  
And only one card has stayed behind in my  
hand—the card you chose and signed!"  
Display the single card in your left hand and  
accept your well-earned applause.*

## *The Cards of Capistrano*

### *Effect*

Three cards travel individually and invisibly from the deck to a packet of cards that has been trapped under a spectator's hand the entire time. To everyone's astonishment, the effect is immediately repeated with five cards, which travel as a group beneath the spectator's hand. This classic of card magic, traditionally referred to as Cards Across, has been featured in one version or another by almost all good magicians and was a favorite of the nineteenth century Viennese master, J. N. Hofzinsner. The effect is clear and easily grasped by the spectators. Furthermore, this simple version provides excellent practice in palming techniques.

### *Preparation*

Place the four Threes on top of the deck. This can be done in advance, with any preceding tricks structured to preserve the top stock, or you can use the spread cull (*Volume 1*, page 187) to assemble the cards secretly at the top, doing this preferably during the course of a preceding effect.

### *Construction, Management and Script*

Give the deck an overhand false shuffle that retains the four Threes on top. In a second shuffle sequence, pull off the top half of the deck in a block, injog the next card and shuffle off the balance. Pick up a break under the injog and classic force (*Volume 1*, page 217) one of the four Threes, working to a spectator on your left. Have this card placed aside face down and unseen on the table. Since it makes no difference which of the four Threes is taken, the classic force should pose no problems.



Place the deck face down in front of a spectator on your right, requesting that he cut off a small packet of roughly a dozen cards. *"Please count the cards in your packet."* You demonstrate how you wish this done by taking the deck face down in left-hand dealing position to count his small packet into pile, pick up the three cards you have counted and replace them on the deck, catching a left little-finger break beneath them. Focus your attention on the spectator's count, which you follow with interest, as you nonchalantly square the deck with both hands, palming the top three cards in your right hand. Place the deck on the table and rest both hands on the table edge.

Let's assume that the spectator has counted ten cards. *"Good. Ten cards, which you have counted yourself. Please pull the cards toward you and place your right index finger on top of them."*

As you say this, push the cards as shown in the illustration, secretly adding the three palmed cards to the heap. Once the spectator presses his index finger down on the cards, any possible warp in them, resulting from their being palmed, will be eliminated.



Turn to the first spectator, on your left, and ask for the value of the previously selected card. *"It's a Three,"* is the response.

*"Good. You selected a Three at random, so I'll try to make three cards from the deck travel under your hand [to the second spectator]. You may feel a slight jolt under your index finger."* Riffle the outer end of the deck once toward the cards under the spectator's finger.



*"Did you feel anything?"* No matter what the spectator's response, riffle the cards a second time. *"It's plain to see that your index finger is higher now. And the deck is lighter."* Riffle a third time. *"If that worked, your packet should now have thirteen cards."*

Briefly spread the cards in your hands face down, to underscore your statement. The spectator is now asked to count his cards onto the table to verify their number. As this is done, push your cards back together, catching a break under the top five cards, and palm them in your right hand while squaring the deck.

ТОВАРНОЕ ОЧКО

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Direct your attention to the spectator's count and, joining in, you purposely slow down the count and emphasize the number by counting deliberately and clearly. As soon as the count reaches the original ten, place your right hand on the counted pile, secretly adding the five palmed cards to it, and say, "Stop! That's ten cards. How many are left?"

Look at the spectator and wait for his answer. "Count them one at a time onto the table, loud and clear." The final three cards are now counted onto the pile on the table. This is apparently the climax of the effect—yet you have just prepared for a second flight of cards. "It's not hard to get cards to fly from place to place. The difficult part is getting them to do it invisibly. When those three went, there was a little flicker right about here." Point to a spot in the air several inches from the spectator's packet. "It was brief, but you probably saw it. I'll try to get them to do it again. But this time, no flicker. And to make it a bit harder, I'll make more cards go; let's say four, or—even more challenging—five!" Have the spectator again place his index finger on top of the packet of cards just counted onto the table. The situation appears even more impossible, since people now know exactly what to expect; yet you never touch the packet again.



Pick up the deck and hold it in right-hand end grip. With your left thumb, pull the top card into your left hand.



Repeat this with four more cards. On taking the fifth card, your left hand naturally pulls back a bit and passes under the deck for a fraction of a second. In that instant, smoothly pick up the five cards under the deck as your now empty left hand turns back outward and moves away from the deck and to the left. Form a broad one-handed fan (Volume 1, page 181) with the right hand's cards and wave the fan at your half-closed left hand.

Turn your left hand palm toward the audience, making a kneading motion with the fingers; then open them to show the cards have vanished. Next, have the spectator count the thirteen cards under his index finger. To everyone's astonishment, there are now eighteen! The paths of magic are inscrutable!

## CHAPTER 19

### THE PASS

*"Although, in late years, various shrewd and highly effective stratagems have been devised to take the place of the pass, nevertheless this ancient device is still one of the most valuable assets of the card magician."*

John Northern Hilliard





Like several other techniques of the card conjurer, the origins of the pass can be traced to cheating methods used at the gaming tables. Originally the pass was used almost exclusively to nullify a cut, restoring the deck to its original order. While that is still a viable use in card magic, the "secret cut" is principally used by magicians as a card control. In this chapter we will examine the pass in its classic form, then discuss several ways to provide better cover for it. Although much effort has been expended in the last fifty years to find substitutes for the pass, there is scarcely any technique that attains the same goals as directly and as elegantly.

## The Classic Pass

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and insert the outer phalanx of your left little finger into a break arbitrarily chosen for this explanation to be in the center of the deck. The left index finger is in its usual position at the outer end of the deck. The right hand, which holds the deck in end grip, has been omitted in the illustration to display more clearly the position of the left little finger.



The right thumb and middle finger are near the inner and outer left corners respectively. Thus, although the top of the deck is visible, the ends and sides of the deck are obscured. The tips or pads (depending on the size of your hand) of your right ring and little fingers contact the outside of your left index finger. The illustration is an audience view.



The top portion of the deck is gripped from below by the left little finger and above by the left middle and ring fingers. Pivot this portion clockwise slightly to the right and to the rear until your left little finger clears the top of the inner end of the bottom packet. With your right thumb and middle finger, begin to press the left side of the bottom packet against your left thumb. The card at the face of the top packet contacts the upper right edge of the bottom packet. This initial twist of the top packet spares the bottom packet the need to travel around the outer phalanx of the left little finger. Your curled right index finger is now resting on the bottom packet.







Continue to press the bottom packet, which is now coming into view, firmly against your left thumb, while at the same time your right thumb and middle finger become an axis on which the bottom packet will pivot slightly. Once the cards are in view, keep your right fingers motionless and the bottom packet horizontal. Simultaneously, with your left fingers, pull the top packet down farther. The tips of your right middle, ring and little fingers remain in contact with the outside of your left index finger, providing the necessary cover from the front.



As soon as the left side of the top packet silently passes the right side of the bottom packet, use your left fingers to snap their packet quietly down, bringing it beneath the right hand's original bottom packet. The left side of the left hand's packet glides along the face of the right hand's packet until the two portions are square. Keep your left thumb motionless at the left side of the deck the entire time.

With your right hand, place the deck on the table or hand it to a spectator.



### Check Points

1. Begin by thoroughly familiarizing yourself with the starting position of the hands and deck. The classic pass is one of the very few techniques requiring the little finger's outer phalanx to be inserted completely into the break.
2. The pass must be executed the moment your right hand grasps the deck. The right hand should be approaching the deck to take it or square it—no other intent should be suspected. In any case, avoid holding the deck with both hands for an extended period, waiting for an auspicious moment to do the pass. Trust me, this always looks suspicious. To justify the right hand's grasp on the deck, you might spread the cards between your hands (not as far as the break, of course), saying, *"Please don't forget your card, which lies somewhere here in the deck."* Push the cards together again and square them, executing the pass in the process.  
  
At an advanced stage you'll be able to perform the pass as you apparently only lift the deck to your fingertips for squaring.
3. Keep the tips of the right ring and little fingers in contact with the outside of the left index finger throughout the pass as this provides optimum cover from the front.
4. The motion of the top packet is controlled entirely by the left little and ring fingers (possibly with some support from the left middle finger).
5. As soon as the bottom packet is visible it must remain motionless and parallel to the floor. There must be no telltale tipping motion visible.
6. The classic pass is among the most rapid of techniques—for once the public's assumption regarding the role of quickness of the hand is actually true here. Practice for speed. *But before you strive for speed, you must understand the constituent actions and rehearse them slowly.* Once upon a time, the competence of a card conjurer was measured by the number of passes he could execute in a minute. It was said, for example, that the famous American card expert, Dr. James W. Elliott (whose riffle pass strategy we will next examine) could perform one hundred and twenty passes per minute. Forget about this. Such claims are sheer braggadocio. The point is not to be able to perform numerous consecutive passes as quickly as possible, but to perform a *single* pass very quickly, which is an entirely different proposition. Take a moment between each pass, allowing your hands to relax while you visualize the context of the routine; then execute the pass.
7. Perform the pass as you exhale. Your work will be more relaxed and you can focus your energies on your hands.
8. As with palming, beginners tend to press their arms awkwardly against their bodies or pull them in suddenly. Guard against this by holding your arms parallel to the floor, roughly at hip level when you are standing. If you are seated at a table, your forearms can rest relaxed on the table top.



# Covers for the Pass

There is no substitute for the precision and speed when executing the pass. And yet I know of no pass that is invisible under all conditions. We shall therefore examine several strategies that help to mask the technique.

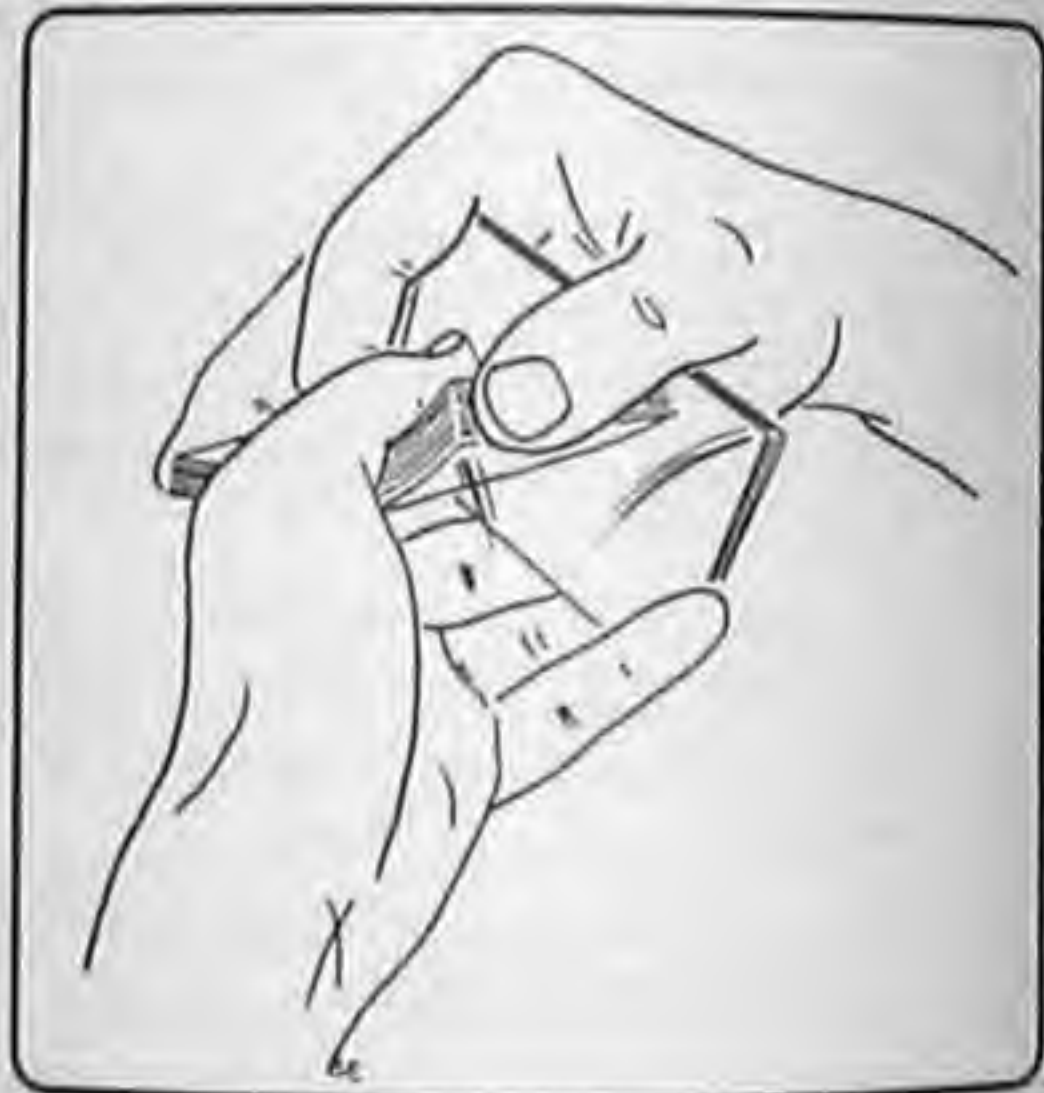
## THE RIFFLE PASS

Dr. James W. Elliott was a professional magician of prodigious skill with a deck of cards. Among the ideas he is said to have pioneered and perfected was the execution of the pass under cover of riffling the cards. The technique about to be explained, while not Dr. Elliott's precise handling, owes a large debt to him.

Hold the deck in preparation for the pass as previously described, but with your left thumb stretched across the top of the deck. With your right middle and ring fingers, begin to riffle the outer ends of the cards from bottom to top. In doing this, it is natural to tip the outer end of the deck up a bit.



The second the last card has been riffled off, tip the deck back to a horizontal position, executing the first part of the pass as you do so; that is, maneuver the top portion of the deck to a vertical position under your right hand. Then, with your right thumb, bend the inner end of the bottom portion slightly upward in preparation for riffling off the inner ends of the cards.





Then complete the pass, snapping the left hand's vertical portion flat beneath the right hand's horizontal one. At the very instant the packets are moving into alignment with each other, riffle the inner end of the right hand's cards off your right thumb. From start to finish, it should look as if you riffled completely through the deck at the outer end, and then at the inner end. This technique is a most effective cover for the pass.



### Check Points

1. Coördinating the timing of the riffles and the pass will present difficulties at first. If you try to follow the description step by step, you will tend to complete the first part of the pass before you begin to riffle the inner end of the deck. In practice, however, the time between these two steps is the slimmest fraction of a second, much shorter than the description implies.
2. It follows, that you must be thinking of riffling the deck before you physically begin the pass. Before your thoughts can be translated into action, the first part of the pass will have been completed—this is more or less the timing involved.
3. There are experts who riffle the deck at both ends simultaneously. In this case, it is recommended that the pass be executed during the first riffle, as you look at the audience. You then look at the deck and riffle again. This is what I call "reverse conditioning". In normal conditioning, you would riffle the cards honestly while everyone's attention is on the deck; then the spectators' attention is drawn away from the deck as you riffle it again, this time executing the pass. The first normal riffle conditions them to believe that the second riffle, which they don't actually observe but only hear, is innocent too. With reverse conditioning, the opposite tactic is taken: You riffle the cards and execute the pass while the audience's attention is not on the deck. Then, as their attention is drawn to the cards, you perform a second riffle. Seeing that this riffle is honest, they are lead to believe that the first riffle, which they missed, was too.
4. The same mechanics form the basis for the "dribble pass", in which the pass is executed as the right hand dribbles the cards into the left hand (instead of riffling them). In this case, the left thumb once more lies along the left side of the deck, as in the classic pass.



## OTHER COVERS



Lift the deck to your ear and riffle its outer end. You might say something like "*It sounds like your card is twenty-fourth from the top.*" The pass is performed as both hands move the deck upward. Turn your body slightly rightward. The pass is completed before the deck reaches chest height.



With your left thumb, push the top card off the deck, letting it fall on the table. As the card falls it will attract the attention of the audience, and at that instant you can perform the pass. The illustration is an audience view.

Move both hands with the deck to the left in preparation to ribbon spread it from left to right on the table. Execute the pass as you move leftward and immediately ribbon spread the cards. Look boldly at the audience, not at your hands, as you execute the pass and spread the cards.



Spread the deck between your hands and hold it out for the spectator to replace the selected card. As you do this, your arms should be extended rather far from your body. Take a break over the card as you close the spread, and execute the pass as you relax your arms and move them in toward your body. The illustration shows the action from the left side.





# TRICKS WITH THE PASS

## Finnegins Rewake

### Effect

The spectator freely chooses a card from a shuffled deck. It vanishes instantly from the deck when tapped, and ultimately reappears on top of the deck. The handling appears extremely fair and the effect is straightforward and easy to follow.

### Construction, Management and Script

This trick is essentially an older one called "Off Agin, On Agin, Finnegin!"<sup>12</sup>, with several small simplifications in handling.

Have the deck shuffled, then take it back and hold it face down in left-hand dealing position. With your left thumb, riffle the outer left corner from top to bottom, saying, "Please say stop as I riffle through the center of the deck."

Divide the deck at the specified location, lifting off the top portion in right-hand end grip. Offer the spectator the top card of the bottom packet.

Reassemble the deck as the spectator displays the selection, and buckle the bottom card with your left index finger, taking a left little-finger break above it. Take the deck in right-hand end grip, transferring the break above the bottom card to your right thumb. Swing cut the top half of the deck into your left hand, which you then extend to the spectator so that the selected card can be placed on top.



"As soon as I say the ancient magic words sim-sala-bim, your card vanishes." Coördinating actions with words, look down at the selection as you tap the right hand's packet flat against the left's and say, "Sim..." Then look up at the audience as you say, "sala..." and give the packet another tap. On this second tap, your right thumb releases the bottom card of the right hand's packet and allows it to fall onto the spectator's card. Your left middle, ring and little fingers catch and square the fallen card onto the packet the instant it arrives. Then, with the pronouncement of "bim," you look back down at the left hand's cards.

The right hand's packet should contact the left's for only a fraction of a second. Imagine that the left packet is a hot plate that you can only touch briefly without getting burned. Ask the spectator to take the top card from the left hand's packet, look at it and show it to everyone. It is obviously not the selection, confirming your statement that "...your card



vanishes." As the spectator displays the card, relax and bring both packets briefly together. Insert the left little finger between them and execute the classic pass, then immediately separate the hands and their exchanged packets. You might wish to flash the face of the right hand's packet unobtrusively, in case anyone suspects that you have picked up the selection under the packet. The spectator can now go through the left hand's entire packet and find no trace of the chosen card.

Take the left hand's packet back from the spectator and tap it with the right hand's packet, saying, "*Again I say the magic words sim-sala-bim, and your card reappears, penetrates up through the deck and arrives on top.*" As you say this, tap the bottom packet twice with the top packet and on the third tap let the right hand's packet fall squarely onto the left hand's cards. Slowly turn the top card face up and show everyone that it is, indeed, the selection!

## Card Through Handkerchief

### Effect

This is a classic effect, believed to have been originated in the late 1800s by a Chicago magician whose name escaped being recorded.<sup>12</sup>

A spectator chooses a card and replaces it in the center of the deck. The performer wraps the deck in a handkerchief, which he then holds by its four gathered corners. As he gently shakes the handkerchief, the selected card slowly and visibly penetrates through the fabric.

### Requirements

In addition to the deck, you will need an opaque handkerchief. A silk breast-pocket handkerchief, often sold with matching tie, is recommended as these are generally made from a heavy weight of silk and are completely opaque. Carry this in a convenient pocket.

### Construction, Management and Script

Have a card freely chosen, noted by all and replaced in the deck, catching a left little-finger break above the card as it is inserted. You can use the diagonal insertion (*Volume 1*, page 69) to accomplish this. Square the deck at your fingertips.

With your right hand, take the handkerchief from your pocket and give it to a spectator with the request that it be thoroughly examined to confirm the absence of trap doors, microchips or hidden assistants. During this by-play, calmly bring your hands together to complete the squaring and execute the pass, secretly bringing the selected card to the top.

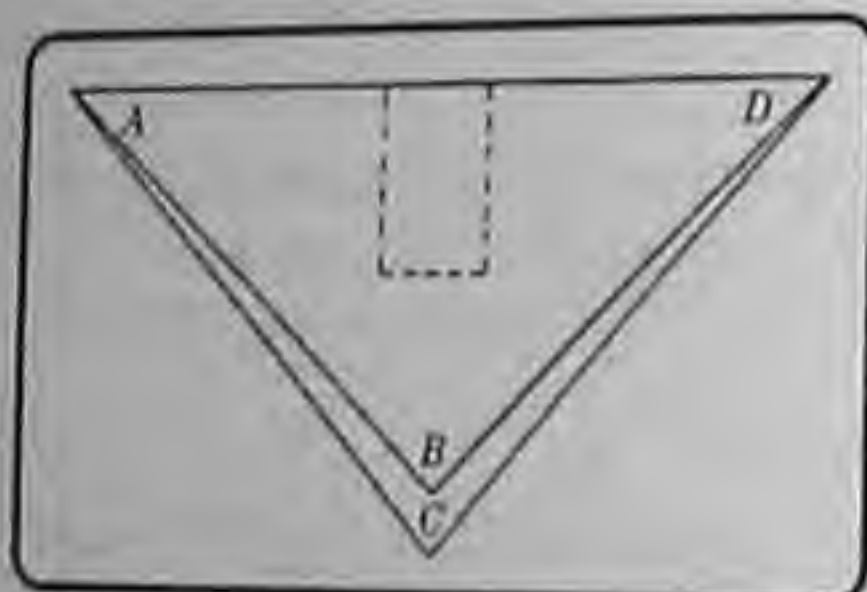




Take back the handkerchief and drape it over the deck, so that Corner C lies on your left forearm.

As soon as the deck is covered, use your left thumb to flip it secretly face up. Then buckle the lowermost card of the deck (the selection), so that you can take a left little-finger break above it. Meanwhile, you explain, *"As you can see, this handkerchief, which you have examined yourself, is completely opaque."*

Reach under the handkerchief with your right hand and remove all the cards above the bottom card, placing them back in the left hand, but on top of the handkerchief. The deck is almost exactly on top of the card under the handkerchief, offset very slightly forward. Orient the deck with its sides aligned to the diagonal passing through Corners B and C. Your justification: *"Not only is the handkerchief opaque, it is also impenetrable."*

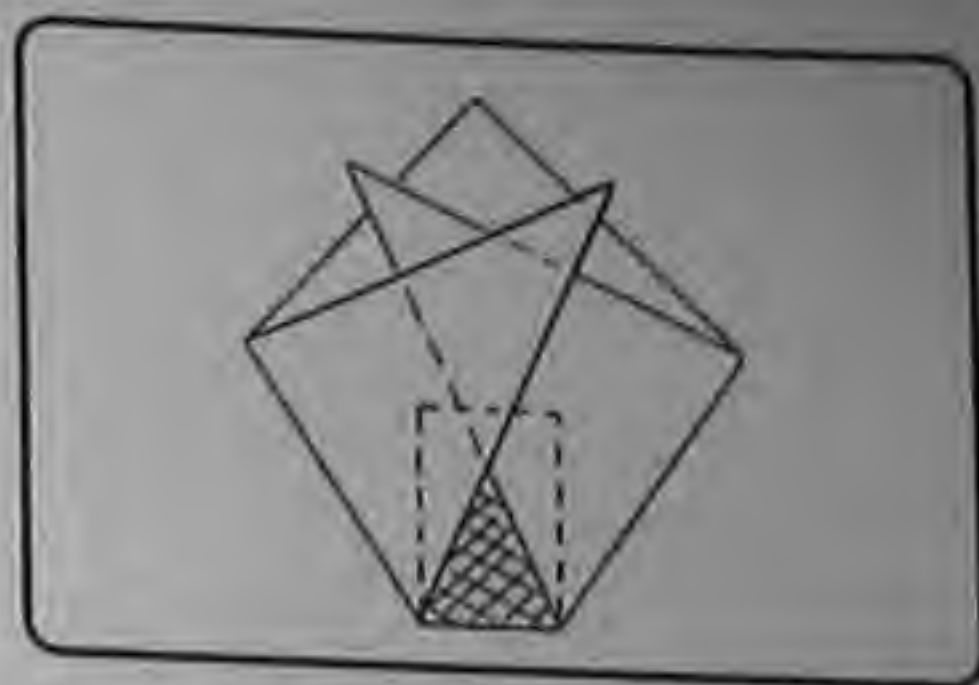


*"To prove that nothing and no one can pass through this handkerchief, I'll wrap it clearly and carefully around the deck."* Do this, first taking Corner B, which hangs down from the tips of the fingers, and placing it over Corner C.



The corners need not overlie each other exactly. Wrap Corner D under the cards, so that it sticks out beneath the left side of the deck, which you transfer to your right hand in the process. Similarly, wrap Corner A under the deck, transferring it back to your left hand.

With your right hand, grasp the handkerchief by its four corners and let the deck hang suspended inside. The selected card is hidden in the folds behind the deck, out of the audience's view.



Now gently shake the handkerchief and deck. The selected card will slowly emerge, facing the spectators as it slides down out the folds at the lower end of the deck.

With your left hand, grasp the card, just before it is ready to fall to the floor, and pull it completely from the handkerchief. If you pause for a several seconds in this "applause position", with your hands holding the objects, you may be assured of the desired response.

### *Final Note*

This simplified method was taught to me by Carlhorst Meier of Nuremberg, Germany. In the classic handling the chosen card is controlled to the top, then palmed in the right hand, after which the deck is given out for shuffling. Meanwhile, the left hand takes the handkerchief and holds it for a few seconds. The cloth aids in covering the right hand as the card is

kept concealed in the palm. The handkerchief is then spread over the right hand and the deck is set onto it. You are now in position to wrap the deck and perform the penetration. Those readers who have mastered the palming techniques taught in the previous chapter will likely prefer this method.



## CHAPTER 20

# FALSE DISPLAY COUNTS

*"Well, less is more..."*

Robert Browning



It would be difficult to give a complete account of false display techniques, as there are innumerable variants. The best attempt to date in English, though hardly exhaustive, is Jerry Mentzer's *Counts, Cuts, Moves and Subtleties*. In this chapter I will introduce you to those techniques most commonly used in the performance of "packet tricks". These are tricks using only a few cards rather than the whole deck, and they are often packaged and marketed as individual tricks by magic dealers. The utility of false display techniques is, however, not restricted to packet tricks. As you will see, the techniques described in this chapter are suitable not only for displaying cards, but also for false counting them.

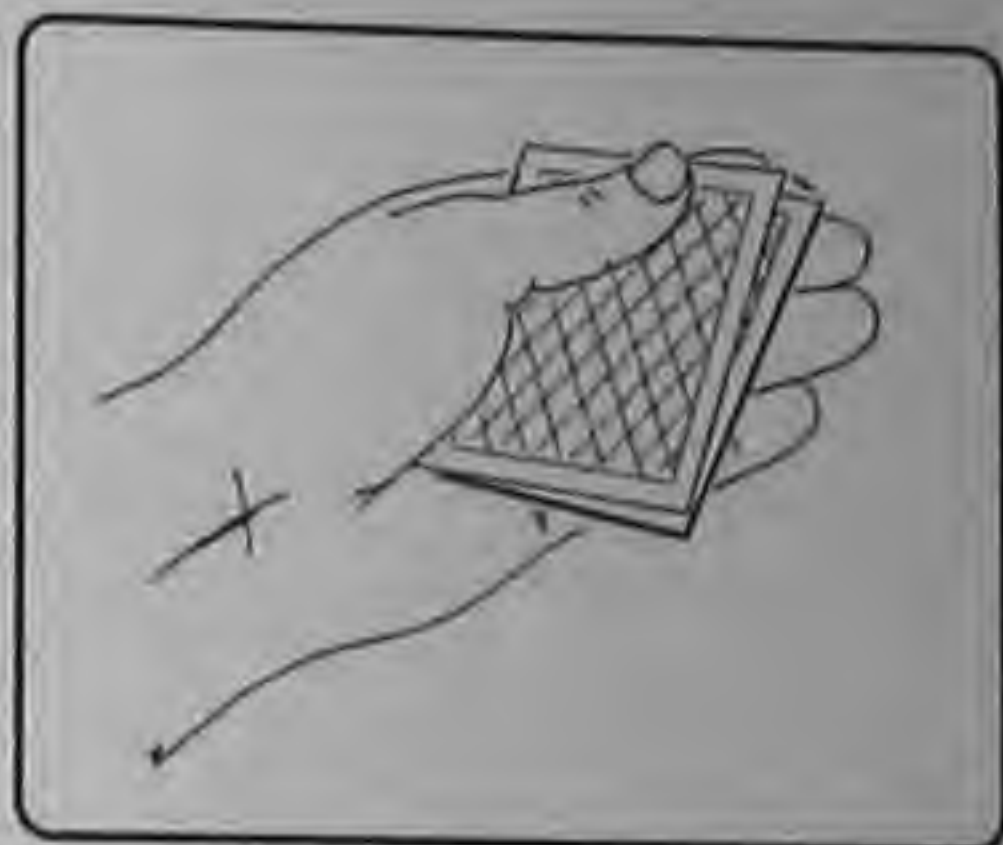


# The Elmsley Count

The Elmsley count was developed and refined in 1954 by Alex Elmsley, the English amateur magician and brilliant innovator. It has exerted a lasting influence on subsequent generations of magicians and unleashed a deluge of packet effects.

In the classic Elmsley count a packet of four cards is shown to consist of four cards but, in so doing, one card remains hidden while another is displayed twice. To illustrate how this false display functions, let's start with a four-card packet, three cards of which are face down, while the third card from the top is face up.

Hold the packet face down in left-hand dealing position. To begin the count, use your left thumb to pull the top card forward and to the left. The inner left corner of the card contacts the crease at the heel of the thumb, which acts as a pivot point, and the edge of the outer end of the card slides over the tip of the left index finger, which serves to hold the lower three cards in alignment. This action takes place an instant before you take the packet into your right hand.

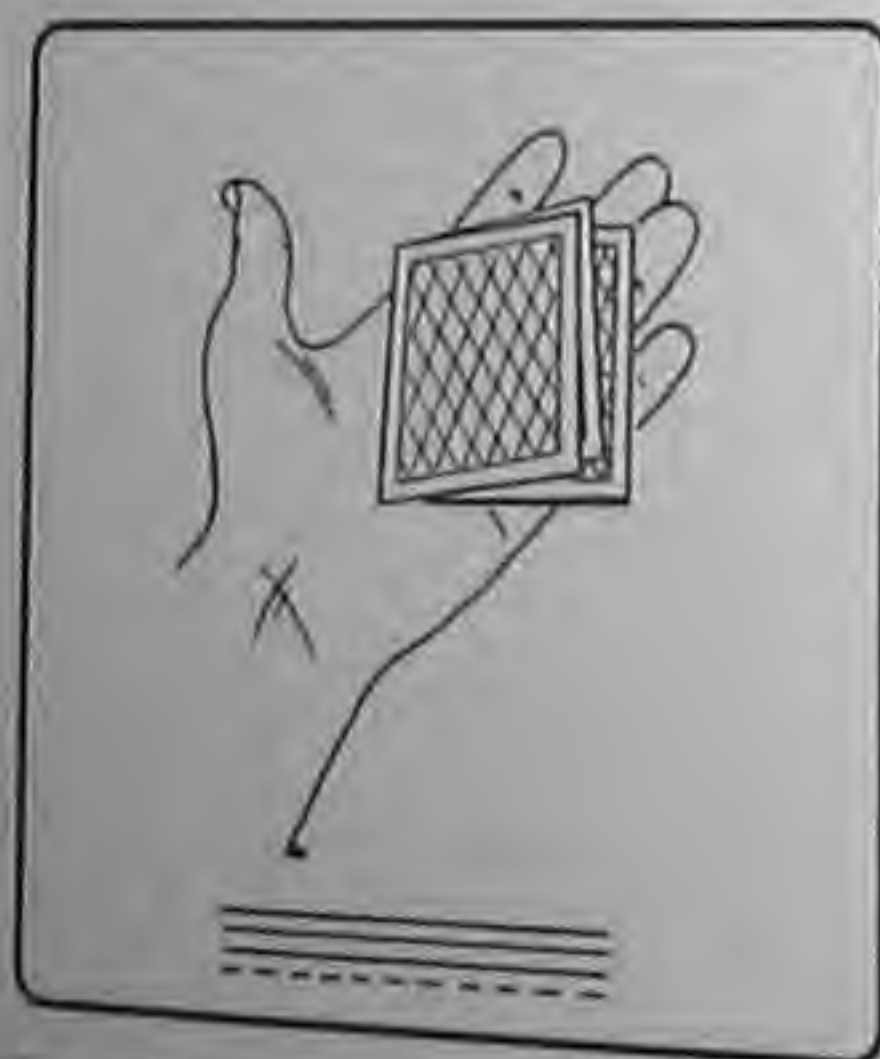
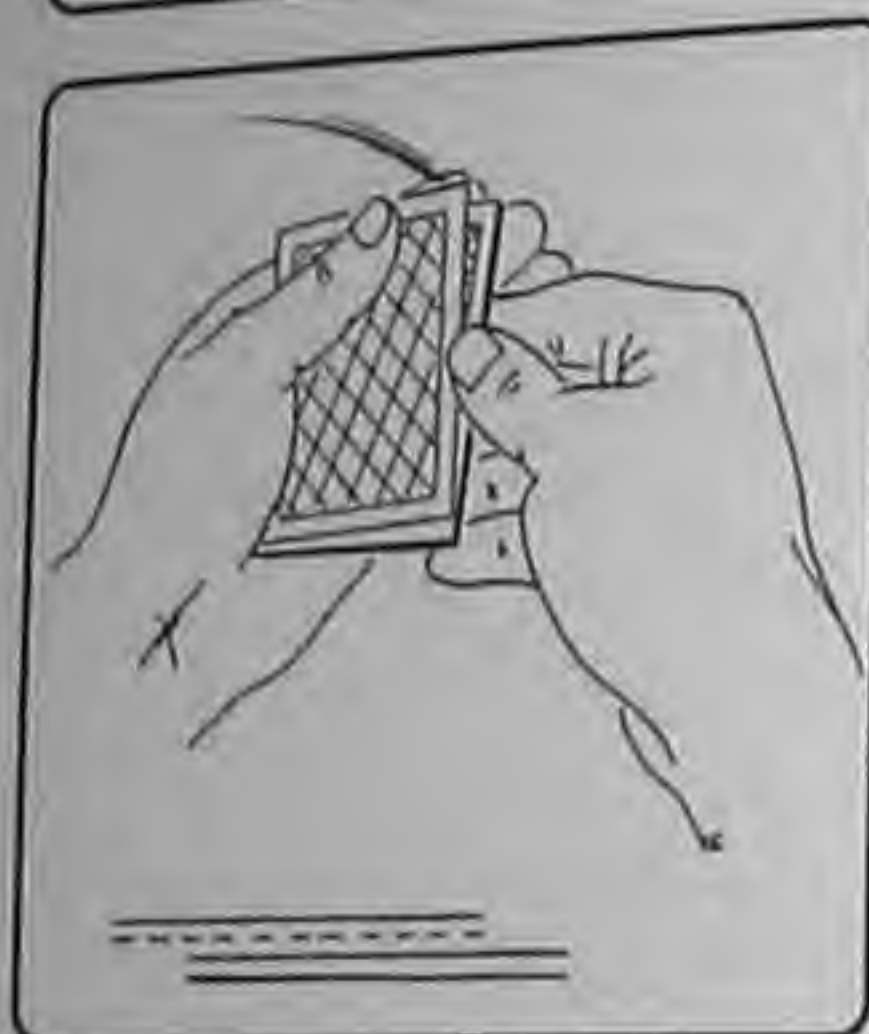
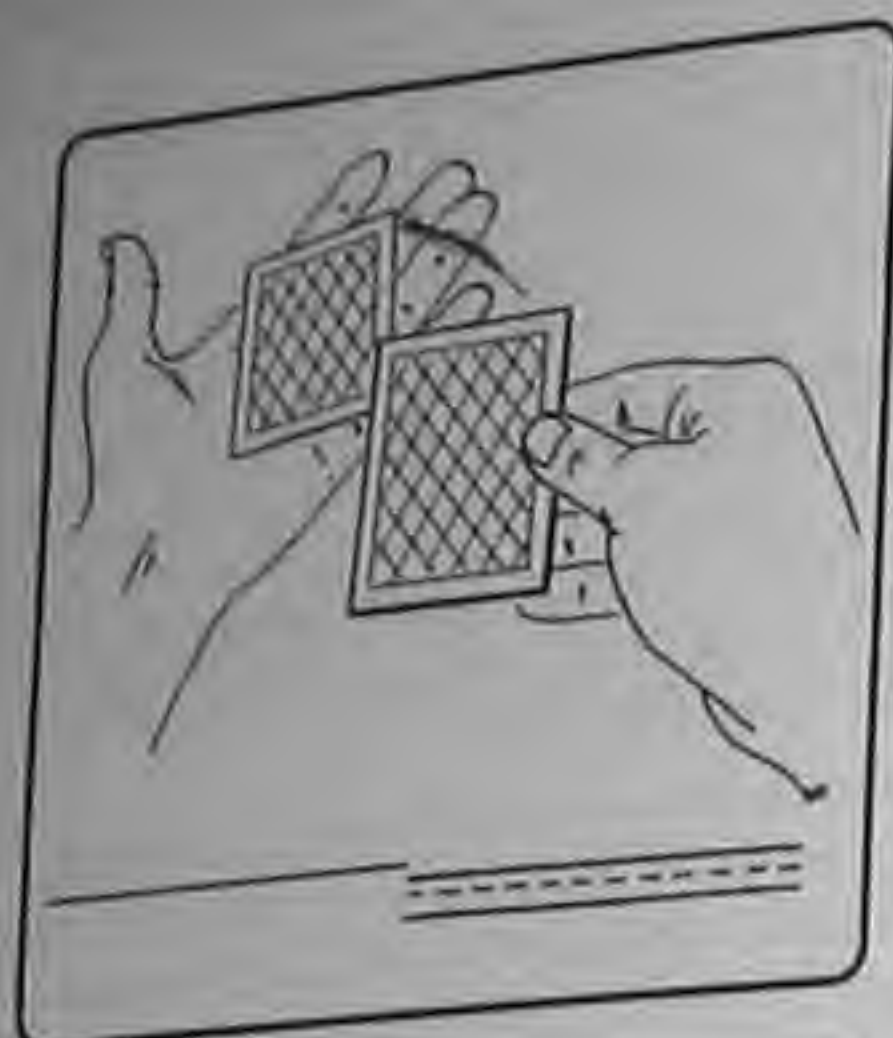


With your right hand, grasp the lower three cards at their right side in a *pinch-grip*. That is, your right index and middle fingers contact the face of the packet, while your thumb rests on the back of the three-card block, positioned above and between the index and middle fingers. The pinch-grip results from the gentle pressure of these fingers, which hold the packet securely in alignment. This grip also permits you to push off multiple cards as a single card. To make it easier to grasp the packet in your right hand, lower the left middle, ring and little fingers.

The positions of the cards are shown schematically at the bottom of the illustration, with the broken line representing the face-up card.







Move your left hand diagonally outward to the left with the top card, counting "One" silently to yourself. You must establish from the start that your left hand performs the display actions, being the hand that takes the cards one by one. In contrast, your right hand remains motionless throughout the display. Note the left hand's open posture after it has taken the card. This is achieved by simply extending the thumb to the left.

During the next sequence, the card just counted is taken under the right hand's packet while the original second and third cards are treated as a single card. Move your left hand back, apparently to draw off the next card. Slide the left hand's card under the right hand's packet while your right thumb *simultaneously* pushes the top two cards of the packet an eighth to a quarter of an inch to the left. These two cards need not be perfectly aligned. Grasp the left hand's card with the tips of all four right fingers, which relax slightly to receive it. It may be necessary to pull the card to the right with the fingers, *but the card should never extend beyond the right side of the cards above it*. Clip the slightly sidejogged top pair of cards between the left thumb and the ball of the index finger and pull the double card diagonally forward to the left as you mentally count "Two."

On the counts of "Three" and "Four" the two cards remaining in the right hand are taken individually onto the two in the left hand, using exactly the same rhythm and overt actions established in the previous two displays. However, these last two cards are taken purposely misaligned onto the double card. This gives the spectators the impression that they have seen four cards. Display the deliberately unsquared packet on your open left hand for two seconds, then close the hand, squaring the cards.



### Check Points

1. Your first difficulties will probably come with the counting of the top card. Read the description carefully and study the illustration. The position and pressure of the tip of the left index finger are decisive.
2. The act of display takes place on two levels. The first level (Priority 1) is presented by the left hand *into which* the cards are taken. The second level (Priority 2) is presented by the right hand, which holds the packet and *from which* the cards are taken. The priority of each level is communicated to the spectators through a) emphasis of the actions, b) rhythm, c) gaze and d) verbal commentary. Let's examine each of these:
  - a) EMPHASIS OF THE ACTIONS: Only the left hand moves; the right hand remains stationary once it has taken the packet. This makes it clear to the spectators that the left hand is executing the display, and they assign that hand a higher priority, consequently focusing most of their attention on it. This helps to mask the moment of the exchange, which happens on the Priority 2 level and is given a lesser importance, in the right hand. Also make sure that you position your left hand forward of your right hand, lending further visual emphasis to the different levels of importance given the hands.
  - b) RHYTHM: The rhythm must be absolutely uniform. If you practice with a metronome, execute a counting action on each of the beats. You can experiment with different rhythms. Often there is a tendency to count slowly until the exchange is executed, then to speed up in relief that the sleight has been done. Avoid this error. Keep the

rhythm of your actions uniform. You will find an exception—that proves the rule—in the routine "The Royal Aerobats" at the end of this chapter.

c) GAZE: Before the display, look at the audience and make a remark to draw attention to you. Then, as you take the first card, look at the cards and the moving left hand. When your hands apparently take the second card, making the exchange, look up at the audience, diminishing their attention on the cards. Return your gaze to the cards as the third one is taken, and keep it there for the display of the fourth card. Lift your gaze toward the audience again when the display sequence is over.

d) VERBAL COMMENTARY: Counting the cards aloud emphasizes the priorities of the levels. Of course, it is not always desirable to count the cards. Most often your outward intent is merely to display them; for example, the cards are all shown to have red backs or be black cards. Adjust the commentary to suit each particular situation. *An Elmsley count is frequently not a count, but instead a display.*

3. I'll emphasize again that, when stealing back the first card under the right hand's packet, it is important that the card not project beyond the right side of the packet. This is one of the most common mistakes and can arouse the spectators' suspicion that a card has been recycled.
4. Always pull the cards off with your left thumb. It should never look as if your right thumb is pushing cards over. Resist the temptation to do so, particularly on the last two cards.



6. Remember to open your left hand, extending the fingers and thumb after each card is taken. This non-verbally communicates a sense of openness and fairness.

6. Take the last two cards unsquared onto

the left hand's double card.

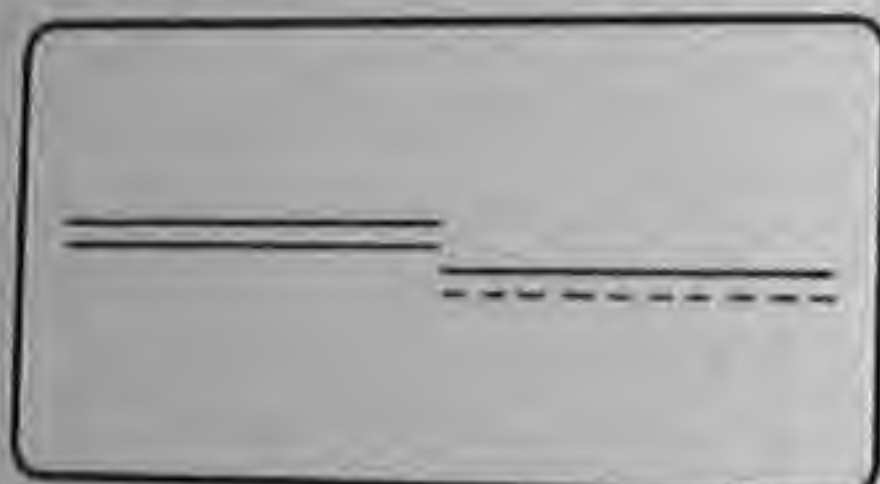
7. The Elmsley count can also be used to hide more than one card. In such cases, the packet consists of more than four cards, but is displayed as four cards nevertheless.

## The Jordan Count

All considerations about handling, gaze, rhythm, etc. expressed in the description of the Elmsley count apply just as importantly to this next false display, created in 1919 by the prolific American inventor Charles T. Jordan.<sup>14</sup> The primary difference in the functions of the two displays is that the Jordan count hides the card on the face of a four-card packet; that is, the card fourth from the top, rather than the card in the third position as occurs with the Elmsley count.

Since the card hidden in the Elmsley count ends up on the face of the packet at the end of that sequence, the Jordan count is perfectly suited as a follow up technique. At the end of the Jordan count, the hidden card moves into third position from the top, which allows both displays to be practiced in tandem without your needing to reset the cards.

In some respects, the Jordan count is psychologically more deceptive than the Elmsley count as the exchange does not take place until the third taking action, after the spectators have been conditioned by two innocent actions identical in appearance to the dishonest one.



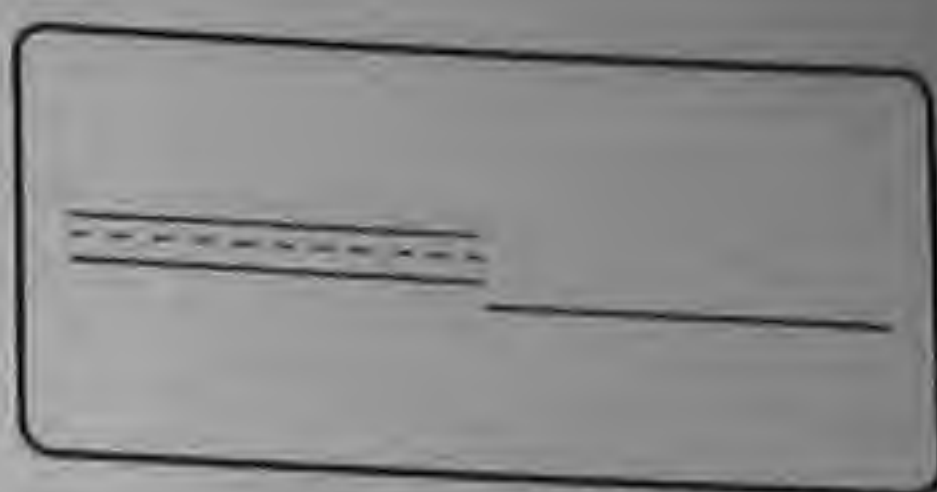
Begin the display with precisely the same actions used for the Elmsley count, pulling off the top card into your left hand. With the second taking action, draw the second card onto the first in your left hand. In contrast to the Elmsley count, this second take is an honest one.



The hidden exchange occurs as the third card is taken. Bring your left hand back, apparently to count off the third card, but you actually place both of the left hand's cards squared under the right hand's cards. As in the Elmsley count, relax the tips of the right fingers to accept, then grip the left hand's pair.



The instant you have secretly placed both of the left hand's cards under the two remaining cards of the packet, use your right thumb to push the top three cards as one to the left, and take them into your left hand, gripped between the thumb and ball of the left index finger. Immediately move the left hand diagonally to the left and outward in a third taking action. As the fourth action of the count, take the last of the right hand's cards onto those in the left hand.



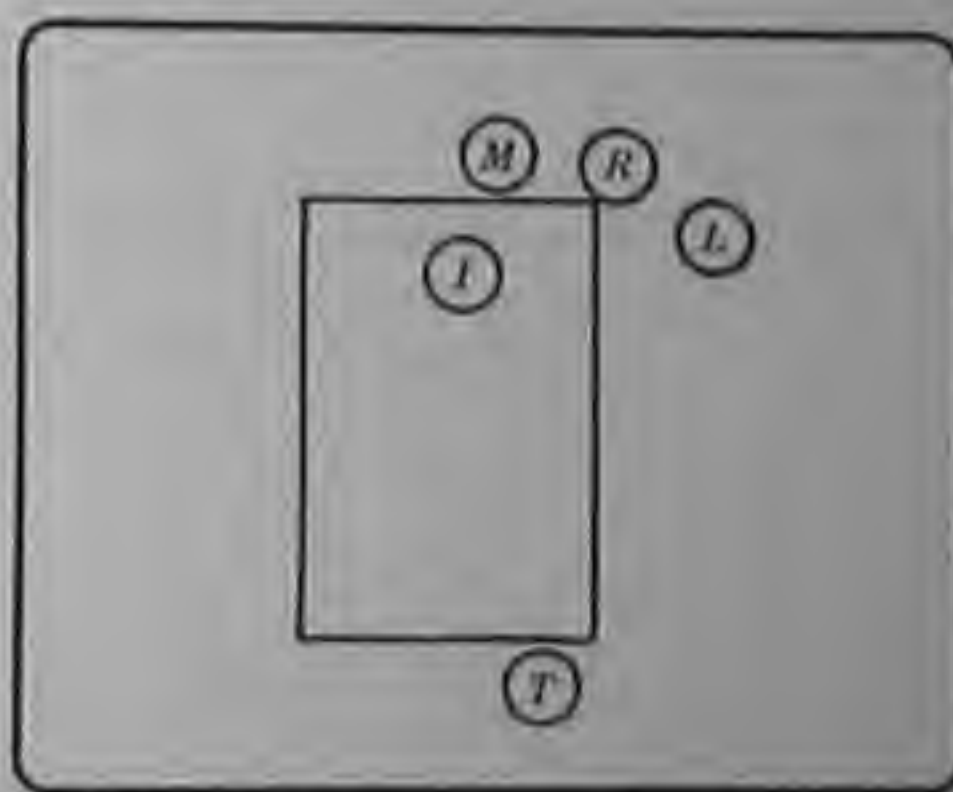
## The Hamman Count

This technique, first published in 1958, was invented by the respected American cardman Brother John Hamman, whose original card creations are highly regarded by his magical colleagues the world over.<sup>15</sup>

Brother Hamman's technique has many applications. For teaching purposes, we will use it to display five black cards and four reds as nine black cards.

Assemble the following packet of cards in order from the face: Ace of Spades—Two of Spades—Three of Spades—Four of Spades—Five of Spades—Ace of Hearts—Two of Hearts—Three of Hearts—Four of Hearts. These cards have been selected for the purpose of explaining the actions of the display. In actual performance, a small range of mixed, high-value spot cards is generally used to make the recalling of individual cards difficult for your spectators.

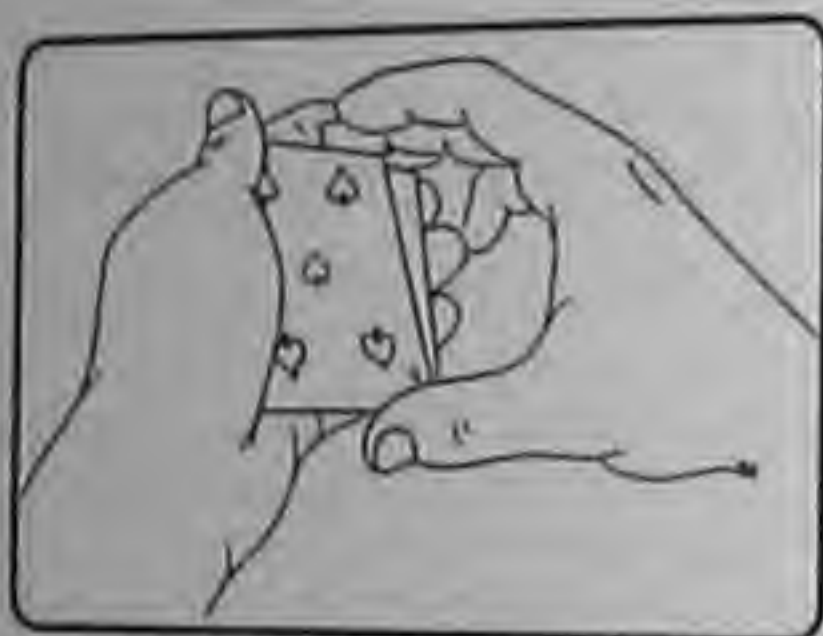
Hold the packet face up in right-hand end grip. The illustration shows a diagram of the necessary finger positions: Hold the packet between the right thumb and ring finger, the latter at the extreme outer right corner. The middle finger merely rests against the outer end, without actually grasping the cards. The index finger is curled slightly and rests on the face of the top card. The little finger lies alongside the ring finger but plays no role throughout the procedure. The right fingers make a very sharp angle with the surface of the cards: The thumb is practically parallel to the end of the packet. This leaves as much of the face of the cards exposed as possible.







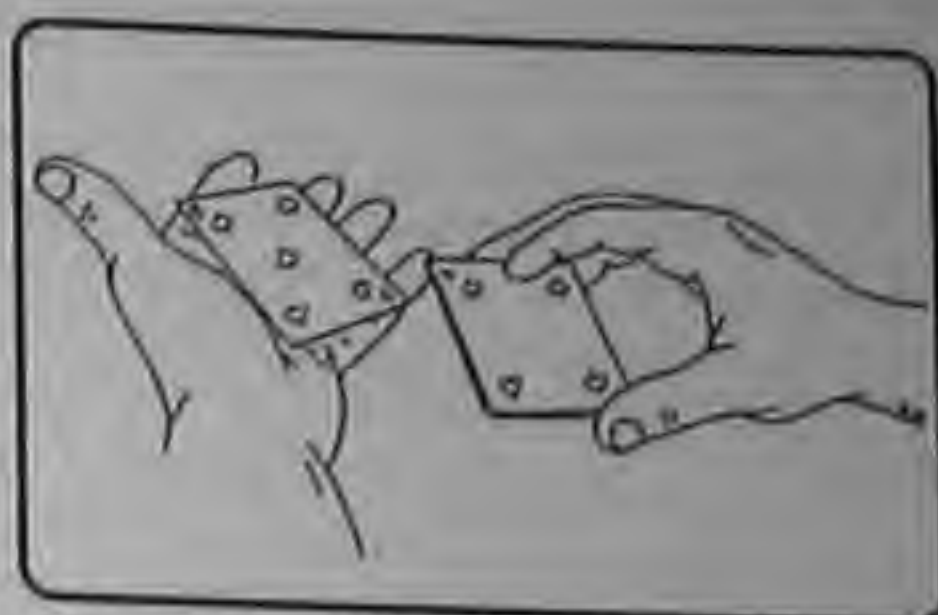
Bring your left hand under the packet as though to grasp it in left-hand dealing position. This places the left thumb naturally on the outer left index of the Ace of Spades. This position of the thumb is critical to the success of the exchange to come. With your left thumb, pull the Ace of Spades to the left and off the packet. Let the Ace fall into an open dealing position on your left hand, which immediately moves diagonally outward and to the left. The card is easily controlled by the index and middle fingers, and the surface of the hand. Your hand should assume this position each time it takes a card from the packet. Draw off the next three cards in exactly the same fashion.



In taking the fifth card, the right and left packets are secretly exchanged as follows: As you bring the left hand to the right hand's packet to draw off the Five of Spades, transfer control of the right hand's cards from your right ring finger to the right middle finger. This is not visible, as it involves only a shift in pressures, not positions. The inner right corners of the left hand's cards contact the right thumb just below the spot where the thumb holds the right hand's packet. This places the left hand's cards precisely below the packet, as has been the case in the previous taking actions. The instant the left thumb contacts the index of the Five of Spades, use your right ring finger to grasp the outer right corners of the left hand's cards. Almost simultaneously extend your right middle finger slightly to the left, moving the upper packet about half an inch leftward. This simulates pulling off the top card with the left thumb and covers the brief moment when nothing is happening. In fact, you grip the upper packet by clipping its outer left corner between the left thumb and the base of the left index finger.



Employing the precise motions used previously, move your left hand diagonally outward to the left, holding the exchanged packet (Five of Spades with the four Heart cards below it) in open dealing position. With this handling an exposed gap at the outer ends of the packets is avoided, since the packets move in virtually the same plane. Having exchanged the packets, hold the right hand's cards in the same grip used before. You now need only draw the remaining four cards singly into the left hand to complete the display sequence.



### Check Points

1. As explained in the description of the Elmsley count, openly extend the left thumb to the left after each counting action to give the impression of complete fairness.
2. Be sure to move the left hand forward and to the left, rather than simply holding it next to the right hand's packet. This will make the spectators aware of two levels: one level, *from which* the cards are taken, and another level, *in which* the cards are displayed. This impression is strengthened by keeping the right hand stationary throughout the procedure, moving only the left hand away with the cards to be displayed held forward and to the left.
3. As with all false displays and counts, rhythm is extremely important and

deserves special analysis. The solution to rhythm with the Hamman count comes from the remarkable Spanish card expert, Arturo de Ascanio: You must insert intentional breaks in the rhythm! The rhythm is as follows: one, pause, two, three, four, pause, five (exchange), pause, six, seven, eight, pause, nine. When I write *pause*, I mean only a slight hesitation—no longer than half a second.

Try now to unify the five "movements" of this rhythm (one—two/three/four—five—six/seven/eight—nine) and practice the timing for a few days. You will see that eventually you'll achieve an absolutely convincing, natural and dynamic Hamman count.

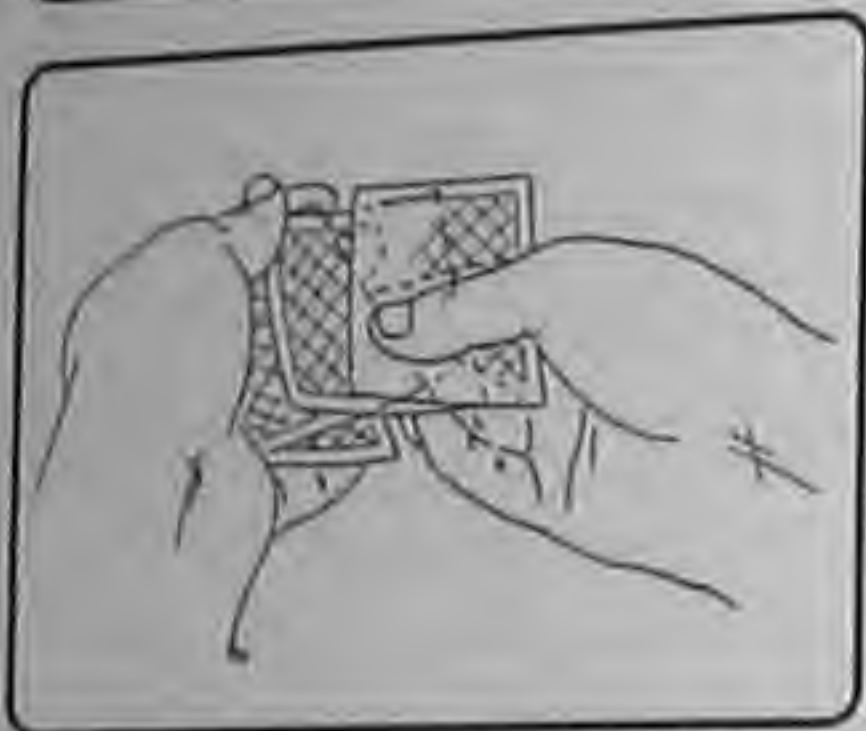


# The Buckle Count

The buckle count uses the previously described buckle technique (*Volume 1*, page 212) and is used here to count or display a five-card packet as only four cards. It can be used to misrepresent larger numbers of cards as smaller ones as well.



Hold the five-card packet face down in left-hand dealing position. With your left thumb, push the top card to the right and take it into your right hand, the thumb on the back, the fingers on the face. Count "One." Push off the second card and take it under the first, fanned to the left, as you count "Two."



Move your right hand back to your left hand to take the third card and simultaneously use your left index finger to buckle the bottom card of the packet slightly. As a result, a break above this card is formed at the inner right corner of the packet. Insert your right index, middle and ring fingers into the break and grip the two cards above as though they were a single card. The transparent view shows the exact positions of the fingers. To widen the break without increasing and possibly exposing the pressure of the left index finger, use your left little finger to press the bottom card downward along its right side.



Take both cards as one under the right hand's first two counted cards and count "Three." On the count of "Four," push over the last card and take it under the other cards in the right hand.



### Check Points

1. As in most counting procedures, only one hand moves, in this case the right, which does the counting. The left hand, from which the cards are taken, remains stationary.
2. Go back and re-read the description of the buckle in *Volume 1*. It is critical that the left index finger make no perceptible buckling action. Concentrate on applying pressure along a diagonal and remember that the pressure is exerted by the entire index finger, which remains always in contact with the bottom card.
3. Your left thumb openly pushes over the last card to maintain a uniformity of action throughout the count.
4. Depending on the requirements of the routine, the cards may be taken in a fan or loosely squared in the right hand.

## The Push-off Count

The push-off count serves a function similar to the buckle count and so will be described using the same example. The technique employed is a variation of that described in Chapter 14 (*Volume 1*, page 211), adapted to the special conditions of a small packet.

Count off the first two cards into your right hand as in the buckle count. As the right hand returns to the left to take the next card, move the left thumb to the left, so that the inside of the thumb tip contacts the very edge of the remaining three cards near their outer left corners. This illustration and the next show audience views.

Press the left thumb against the edge of the upper two cards and push them as a unit to the right, in close alignment. The bottom card of the packet is held back by friction from the inner phalanx of the left index finger. Don't worry if the two cards become slightly misaligned along their left sides as you push them over, as this will be masked by your left thumb. Take the double card into your right hand, catching it beneath the two previous cards as you count "Three." Finally, count "Four," as you push over the last card and take it under the others in your right hand.





### *Check Points*

1. Pressure from the left thumb should be light and even. It is important that the thumb apply its pressure to the edges of the cards. The outer left corner of the bottom card contacts the inner phalanx of the left index finger (or possibly the middle phalanx, depending on the size of your hand) and is held back by friction. This allows both cards above it to be pushed to the right easily and in perfect alignment, as though they were a single card.
2. The same uniform rhythm applies to both the buckle and push-off counts. There must be no hesitation.
3. In both counts, the counted cards may be taken in a fan or in an unsquared condition.
4. You can also make a larger packet seem to contain only four cards. The only change necessary in the handling concerns the block pushed over, which becomes thicker. This greater bulk must be more carefully concealed.

## *The Hamman Two-for-Four Count*

This false display, which conceals two surfaces in a four-card packet, is another innovation by Brother John Hamman.<sup>10</sup> Because all the procedures conform to those of the Elmsley and Jordan counts, this description has no illustrations.

Hold four cards face down in left-hand dealing position. The two middle cards are secretly face up, but you will display the four cards as all face down. Grasp the cards at the right side in a right hand pinch grip, thumb above, index and middle fingers below.

Push the top three cards as one to the left with your right thumb. Clip these three cards in the fork of the left thumb as you move your left hand diagonally outward and to the left. The triple card will automatically fall into dealing position.

Bring your left hand back to the right hand and slide all three cards under the single card held there. Immediately push that card off the packet and to the left, and without the least hesitation draw it forward and to the left into the left hand. This second take uses the same technique employed in drawing off the first card during an Elmsley count.

Slip the left hand's single card under the three in the right hand, and use your right thumb to push those three over. Grasp them together in the fork of the left thumb and draw them off the packet.

Pull the last card onto the left hand's cards to complete the apparent display of four cards. You now hold two face-down cards over two face-up cards in left-hand dealing position. You can execute the display from this starting position as well. The exchanges still take place on the second and third takes. The principle is the same, but you initially pull off a single card, then do two exchanges of one card for a three-card block, and finish by taking the three-card block.



## TRICKS WITH FALSE DISPLAY COUNTS

### The Really Wild Nine-card Trick

This trick is the conception of Brother John Hamman.<sup>17</sup> The presentation and handling explained here is Arturo de Ascanio's. This is a superb example of how the Hamman count can be introduced naturally to a procedure. The fact that the cards used are taken from an ordinary deck makes this an extraordinary packet trick.

#### Effect

The performer shows nine black cards and one "wild" red card, which is set aside face up. Every time he places two black cards on the wild red card, they become red as well. In the end, all the black cards have turned red, while the wild red card turns black!

#### Construction, Management and Script

Remove five high-value red spot cards and five high-value black spot cards (Sixes, Sevens, Eights, and Nines are good, as these are not readily distinguishable from each other). With the cards held face down, place the black cards onto the reds. As you remove the cards from the deck and arrange them, introduce the theme as follows: *"Have I ever shown you The Really Wild Nine-card Trick? No? Do you have any idea why it's called the Nine-card Trick?"* Someone will surely respond that it probably uses nine cards. Look with astonishment at the spectator: *"Oh, you've seen this before? You're right, and here's the really wild tenth card—which is why this is called The Really Wild Nine-card Trick!"*

By now you should have the cards in the required order. Set one of the red cards from the lower part of the packet face down on the table. Thus far you have shown none of the faces, which justifies the display to follow. *"Naturally, I'm holding—that's right, nine cards. Not seven, for then it would be The Really Wild Seven-card Trick."* Count the cards in the face-down packet, simulating exactly the actions of the Hamman count, but actually count each card properly, with no exchanges. This brings the five black cards to the face of the packet, which is now face down in left-hand dealing position.

The use of the innocent count (with no sleight-of-hand) conditions the spectators to accept this manner of handling the cards. This is a good way to make an otherwise unnatural and therefore suspicious handling look perfectly natural. Take care to simulate the actions of the Hamman count as closely as possible, using the same grips, misdirection and rhythm.

*"And why this is the really wild tenth card is easy to explain: It's the only red card."* Using your right hand, turn the tabled card face up and leave it on the table as you continue: *"The other one—two, three, four—five—six, seven, eight—nine cards are all black."* Turn the packet sidewise and face up; then execute a Hamman count to show nine black cards.

Your intention here is not so much to count the cards again as it is to show that they are all black. You've already shown that there are nine cards with the first count. By separately

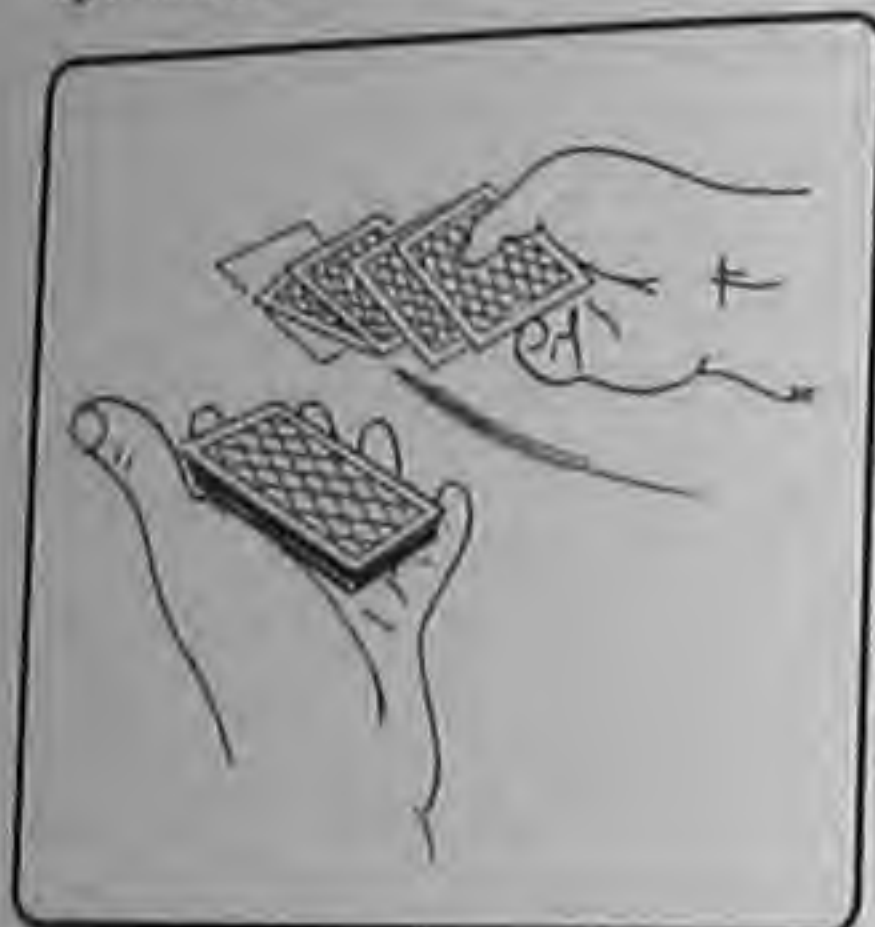


communicating both bits of information (first showing nine cards, then showing that they are all black) you don't overload the spectators with information; instead you reinforce the first information while adding to it. This lets the spectators absorb the information necessary with reasonable ease, yet keeps them mentally busy so that they pay less attention to the actions of the Hamman count. This aspect of the construction offers a technique for psychological misdirection that has broad applicability.

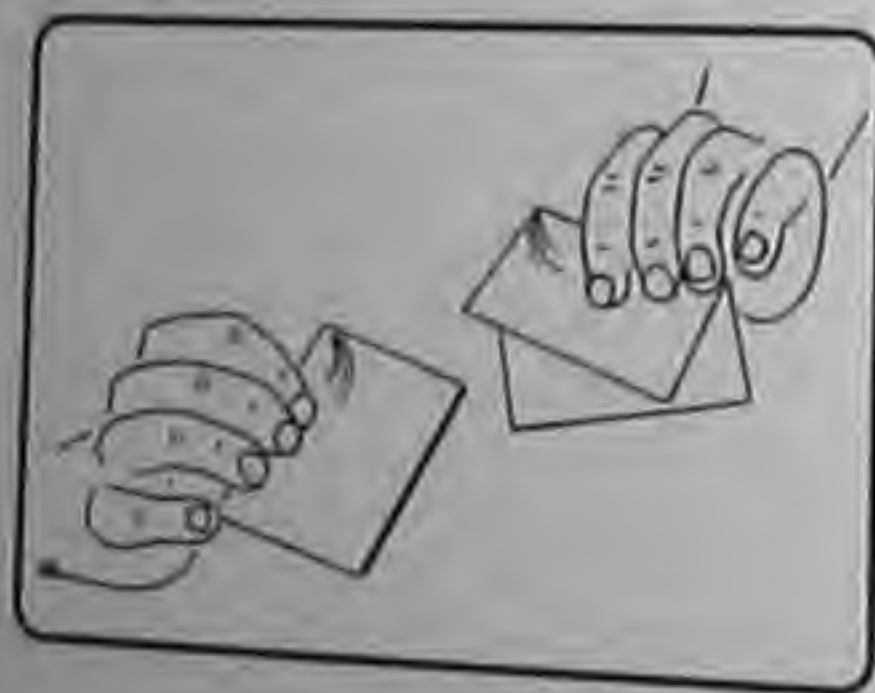
"I'll mix the cards a little," you say as you casually execute the following shuffle: Adjust the face-up packet to right-hand overhand shuffle position. First run three cards, then steal them back in the fourth shuffle action, gripping them between the right thumb and ring finger (see "The Lift Shuffle", page 257) as the left thumb pulls off the rest of the packet. Conclude the shuffle by running the last three cards. If you wish, this shuffle sequence can be repeated.

When you perform the shuffle, pay little attention to it. The spectators will nonetheless notice that all the cards are black. Such an incidental procedure can often be more convincing for spectators than overt proof, because you don't force the facts on them, but allow them to draw their own conclusions. (This shuffle is a shrewd touch added by Fred Kaps, who also enjoyed performing this trick.)

With one more shuffle, you add two black cards to the top of the packet. This is done simply by running two cards and throwing the rest of the face-up packet onto them.



"And I'll place two of them on the red card..." Flip the packet over sideways to place it face down in left-hand dealing position. Immediately spread the cards between your hands and take the top four cards in the right hand. Place the bottom two cards of the right-hand spread face down onto the face-up red card on the table.



"...leaving me with only these seven black cards." Use the push-off technique to push all the left hand cards above the bottom card about one inch to the right and rotate both hands palm down, casually displaying the black cards. Then turn the hands palm up again and bring the cards in both hands together, placing the right hand's cards beneath the left's. Square the packet, turn it face up and use a Hamman count to show seven black cards, switching packets on the fourth take.



*"But all the cards that contact the really wild card, turn red too!"* With your empty right hand, turn both of the tabled face-down cards face up to show two red cards. *"Now that's really wild, isn't it!"*

*"But the best is yet to come. If both of these red cards are returned to the packet of black cards..."* Turn the left hand's cards face down and slip the right hand's two red cards face down under the top two cards of the packet. Then, with a cut, pretend to lose the cards cut about half the packet to the bottom, holding a break between the halves, then double cut to the break. That is, while holding the packet in right-hand end-grip, the left hand cuts roughly half the cards below the break to the top of the packet. It then makes a similar cut, carrying the rest of the cards below the break to the top. This is practical because it takes place entirely in the hands and can be done very casually. *"... I again have one—two, three, four—five—six, seven, eight—nine black cards. That's so wild it's scary!"* Accompanying this commentary you turn the cards face up and do a Hamman count to show nine black cards.

*"And this happens every time. Let me shuffle the cards again and place two of these black cards on the wild red card... leaving me with just one—two, three—four—five, six, seven black cards—and now these are red. Wild!"* Here you simply repeat the little series of false shuffles and set the third and fourth cards from the top of the face-down packet onto the tabled red card. Do another Hamman count to show seven black cards left in the packet; then turn the packet face down in left-hand dealing position. Reach out with your free right hand and turn up the two face-down cards on the table, revealing that they have transformed into red cards.

This repetition serves to set up the climax, in which all the cards become red with the exception of the wild card, which turns black. The more convinced the spectators are that all the cards you are holding are black, the stronger the finish will be.

*"Isn't that wild? Every time I return these cards to the packet..."* With your right hand, pick up all three tabled cards (the transformed cards plus the wild card), and take advantage of the attention this focuses on the right hand to form a left little-finger break under the top two cards (the other two red cards) of the left hand's packet. Place the right hand's three cards face down on the packet and double cut to the break.

*"Whoops, I'd better take out the wild card!"* Act as though this was really a mistake on your part and set the top card of the packet (a black one) face down on the table in the exact location previously occupied by the face-up wild card. *"I hope it's not too late."* Lift the packet slightly at the inner end and look with concern at the face of the bottom card. Wince and nod with resignation. Then look at the spectators.

*"Just as I feared. It's too late! Now I have one—two, three, four—five—six, seven, eight—nine red cards—and a wild card that is black! If that's not a wild trick..."* Suiting actions to words, turn the packet sidewise and face up; then execute a Hamman count to display nine red cards. Point to the black card on the table and turn it face up.

*"...then I don't know what one is!"*



### *Final Notes*

1. If you have performed this properly, which is to say, if your technique has produced conviction, then no one will want to examine the cards. If you feel it is necessary, then you can arrange an exchange of packets after the climax.
2. Brother John Hamman took the trick a step further, placing a red and a black card face up on the table, and distributing the remaining eight cards on them in an alternating deal. He could then finish clean with five red cards and five black cards. Given the method employed, this extension is thoroughly justifiable, but I feel that, from a dramatic point of view, the climax for the spectator occurs when all the black cards have turned red. Therefore, I have chosen to conclude the routine at that point.
3. The color red is one of those most strongly perceived by our senses, which is why I have chosen to change nine black cards into nine red cards and not vice versa. This, I believe, makes the climax visually stronger.

## *The Royal Acrobats*

### *Effect*

In 1960 Dai Vernon released a packet trick that was quickly to become a modern classic: "Twisting the Aces".<sup>18</sup> The plot was that the Aces were removed from the deck and made to turn magically face up one at a time. This little trick spawned hundreds of variations. One of these, by Phil Goldstein, elaborated on the basic effect by having four agile Kings locate a chosen card, after they had gone through their usual backflips, by turning face up in the deck while trapping the selection in their midst.<sup>19</sup> The trick about to be explained owes more than a casual debt to the amazingly creative Mr. Goldstein, but the handling given here has some features that I humbly perceive as improvements. I developed this handling in collaboration with Alfonso, a remarkably accomplished Los Angeles magician, when I was performing at the Magic Castle circa 1986.

In effect, the four Kings turn face down one at a time. Then, when they are cut into the deck, they turn face up again and in the process trap a previously noted card in their midst. The handling is clean and direct.

### *Construction and Management*

Remove the four Kings from the deck and place them face down on the table. The suit order of the cards is immaterial, but the colors of the suits must be alternated.

You will next display the four Kings, and in the process secretly exchange two face-up Kings for two face-down indifferent cards. You will accomplish this with ATFUS (*Volume 1*, page 208). Here are the particulars:

The deck is held face down in left-hand dealing position. With your right hand, pick up the four tabled Kings and hold them face down. As your right hand does this, naturally



drawing attention to itself, take the opportunity to form a left little-finger break under the top two cards of the deck.

Turn the four Kings sidewise and face up onto the deck and grasp all six cards above the break (the four face-up Kings and the two face-down indifferent cards) in right-hand end star acrobats in the deck (see Final Note 1 concerning the verbal presentation). Your cover purpose here is to create an outward motivation to remove the packet from the deck for a moment, while you to obtain a left little-finger break under the top card of the deck. Bring the right hand's packet back over the deck so that your left thumb can pull the top King onto the deck. As you do this, steal the card above the break under the right hand's packet, your right thumb catching another break between the added card and the packet.

Display the King on top of the deck, then take it under the right hand's packet. This leaves the right thumb holding a break above two cards: a face-down indifferent card and the face-up King just displayed. With your left thumb, draw the second King onto the deck. Display it and place it under the right hand's packet. In drawing the third King onto the deck, let the three cards below the right thumb's break drop onto the deck, concealed by the King now being displayed. Transfer the third King under the right hand's packet and call attention to the final King, which now resides on top of the face-up packet. Position check: On top of the deck in the left hand there are two face-up Kings under a face-down indifferent card; and the right hand's packet consists of two face-down indifferent cards sandwiched between two face-up Kings of contrasting color. Set the deck aside, as it will not be used again until the second phase of this routine.

Now the four Kings will apparently turn themselves face down one at a time. This is achieved by using an identical appearing handling while executing four different counts.

**The first King turns over:** Hold the four-card packet face up in your left hand in preparation for an Elmsley count. Execute the Elmsley count, apparently showing that one of the Kings has turned face down. To make the count more deceptive, I recommend that you pause briefly as soon as the face-down card reaches your left hand. Briefly tap the back of the face-down card with the right hand's two remaining face-up Kings before completing the count. This draws attention to the face-down card and makes it less likely than anyone will notice that the first and last Kings shown are identical.

**The second King turns over:** Count the cards singly, mimicking the same handling style employed when executing the Elmsley count. At the finish of this count, you should be holding a packet in left-hand dealing position that consists of two face-down indifferent cards over two face-up Kings.

**The third King turns over:** Execute a Jordan count to show three face-down cards and a face-up King. Of course, the count should look precisely like the previous two.

**The fourth King turns over:** Execute a two-for-four count to show four face-down cards. Set the packet aside, on top of the card case or extending over the edge of the table, so that you will be able to pick it up in a moment without fumbling or inadvertently exposing the face-up cards.

Now comes the second phase of the routine, during which the four Kings turn face up in the deck to capture a spectator's selected card. Take the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and have the spectator choose a card by peeking at it (*Volume 1*, page 72). Let



the selected card spring off your right middle finger and catch a left little-finger break above it before you release the rest of the cards. Now you will use a clever sleight of Edward Marlo's, the cover-up cut. This sleight replaces the top card of the deck, which is covering two face-up Kings, with the chosen card. Here are the details:

Bring your right hand over the deck and assume end-grip position, at the same time forming a right-thumb break under the top card. Cut all the cards under the little finger's break to the top with the left hand, while maintaining the right thumb's break. Now slip cut (*Volume 1*, page 61) the top card (the selection) onto the cards below the thumb's break. Place these cards on top of the deck to complete the cut. Don't let the face-up Kings below the thumb-break flash into view as this slip cut is made. To guard against this, you may wish to tip the top of the deck slightly toward yourself. When the cutting sequence is completed, the selected card will rest on top of the deck, immediately above the two face-up Kings.



Take the face-down tabled packet into right-hand end grip. These cards are believed to be the four Kings. Holding the deck face down in left-hand dealing position, execute the first part of the Charlier cut (*Volume 1*, page 172), transposing the top and bottom halves, but maintaining the gap between them. Insert the right hand's packet into the gap, but leave it projecting for about an inch from the outer end of the deck.

Let the halves of the deck close, completing the Charlier cut. Then slowly square the deck, allowing the spectators to see quite clearly that the four Kings (or what they take to be the four Kings) go face down into the center of the deck.



Make your favorite magical gesture over the deck and immediately ribbon spread it broadly across the table.

The four Kings have not only turned inexplicably face up, but have trapped one—and only one—card in their midst: the spectator's selection!



## Final Note

Due to the complexity of the technical description, I've not included a verbal presentation, as it would have made it extremely difficult to follow the procedure. The presentation basically revolves around a deck of gymnastic cards, in which the Kings are noted for their acro-

batic abilities. This is demonstrated by the first phase of the routine. The second phase shows that such fitness is not merely an end in itself, but useful in finding selected cards. Of course, all this will be banal, unless you combine it with your own artistic expression.

## CHAPTER 21

# THE DOUBLE LIFT, PART 2

*"Of of what one can't make sense, one may make art."*

John Barth



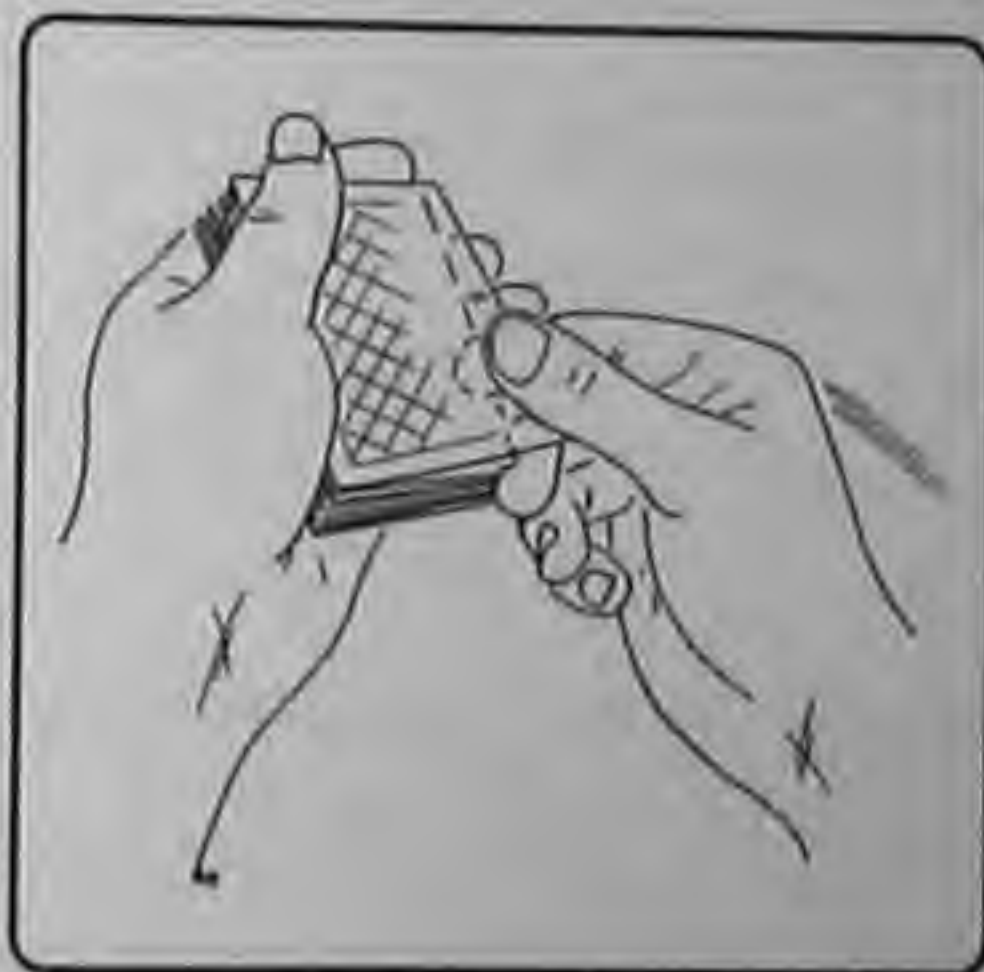


In this chapter a somewhat more difficult double turnover technique than that taught in *Volume 1* (page 130) will be explained; but one that is so disarmingly natural that even experts will not be able to tell whether you have turned over a single card or more. Of course, a prerequisite is that you always turn over the cards, whether a single or multiple, in exactly the same manner.

## Another Double Turnover

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and obtain a left little-finger break under the top two cards. One way to accomplish this (one recommended in 1856 by no less a performer than Robert-Houdin) would be to remove the top card and gesture with it in your right hand as you speak, while your left thumb pushes the new top card of the deck slightly inward and to the right, allowing the left little finger to obtain a break beneath it. You then replace the right hand's card on the deck, freeing this hand to gesture further. (Another easy method to obtain such a break is explained on page 129 of *Volume 1*. In that volume as well are somewhat more demanding techniques to do the job: the thumb count [page 197], the little-finger count [page 201] and the double push-over [page 211].)

After an appropriate interval has passed, bring your right hand, turned palm up, to the deck and insert its index and middle fingers into the break, grasping the double card between your right thumb and the pads of these fingers. Light pressure applied by the left thumb near the outer left corner of the deck keeps the double card and the deck squared. As usual, the tip of the left index finger projects slightly over the top edge of the deck near the outer right corner and helps keep the top two cards from separating at the outer end.







With your right hand, move the double card to the right, holding it securely in this pinch grip. The left side of the two aligned cards remains in constant contact with the top of the deck.



As soon as the left side of the double card reaches the right side of the deck, use your right fingers to flip the double card over sideways and face up onto the deck. As this happens, move your left thumb briefly aside to allow the double card to pass without interruption. The tip of your right index finger "accompanies" the double card during the turnover onto the deck. This keeps the two cards under control at all times, although this should not appear to be the case to an observer. It is precisely the free appearance of the turnover that makes this technique appear so casual and fair.



The card should land projecting about half an inch beyond the outer end of the deck. As soon as it comes to rest, bring your left thumb back to its original position, securing the cards. The thumb is aided in this by your left index finger, which contacts the outer end of the double card and presses lightly downward on it. Since your left thumb holds it along the left side, the double card will buckle slightly and its inner right corner will raise a sixteenth to an eighth of an inch off the deck.

Push inward with your left index finger as you relax the left thumb's pressure. This permits the double card to slide back square with the deck, while you catch a left little-finger break under it. Move your left thumb to the left side of the deck to give the spectators a better view of the face of the card just turned over. The card is now turned face down and squared onto the deck using precisely the same handling. Finally, place the top card of the deck face down on the table.



This technique can also be used if you are standing, performing for a larger group, such as in a living room or even on a stage. Turn the double card over as described above, but as soon as it is face up on the deck, tip the outer end of the deck down and hold the cards so that their upper surface makes an angle of roughly forty-five degrees with the floor. This posture is well suited for a living-room performance.



If you are standing on a raised platform or stage, hold the deck at your left side, raising it to a perpendicular position. As you do this you may wish to shift the little finger to the lower end of the deck to support the cards. This releases the break, but it can be easily formed again as you bring the deck back to a horizontal position, thanks to the opposed natural curvature between the face-down deck and the two face-up cards.





### Check Points

1. Even though you may doubt it at the beginning, the double card is securely under your control in all phases of the turnover. You place your left thumb on the face of the double card as soon as it lands on the deck, then square it with the rest of the cards a fraction of a second later as you obtain a little-finger break beneath it. Although these actions were described separately, in actual practice they flow together without interruption.
2. By extending the technique to include your gaze, you can make the double turnover particularly deceptive. Move your eyes from the audience to the back of the top card and point to it with your right index finger. Lift the index finger and your gaze to look beyond the finger at your audience again. Keeping your eyes on the audience, lower your right hand and turn the top two cards face up on the deck. Only now do you lower your eyes again and look at the face-up card, which you name. Shift your gaze to the spot on the tabletop where you will be placing the card. Now look at the audience as you turn the double card face down on the deck. Look back at the deck as you remove the top card and place it on the table. Naturally, you can alter the direction of the gaze according to the circumstances, but the principle remains the same. This type of attention management, using one's gaze, is based on the teachings of such masters as Juan Tamariz.
3. When you've mastered this double-turnover technique, you can try letting the double card snap off the left thumb just before your right hand turns it over. The snapping sound produced is the same for single, double and triple cards and reinforces the impression that you are handling a single card.
4. This double turnover displays the card square on the deck. This is not only very practical for the performer, but also safeguards against one of the main dangers of double-card handling: separation at the edges. In addition, this handling prevents spectators who are viewing the action from a lower level, like children do, or those persons seated farther away, from perceiving the double thickness of the cards.
5. Here are some thoughts on the timing of this technique, which can be applied to almost any double lift or turnover handling. Turning over a double card is an "in-transit" action (a concept we will explore in greater detail in the "Timing" section of Chapter 27, page 457). The in-transit action is a secondary action used to display the card, while the display itself is the primary action. Turning the double card face down again on the deck is another in-transit action, the primary action this time being to set the card on the table or to do whatever else is required by the trick. A clear understanding of the concept of primary and secondary actions will influence your rhythm and attitude when performing them.



# MORE TRICKS WITH THE DOUBLE LIFT

## *Vanished without a Trace!*

This trick lasts less than a minute, but has all the elements that make a presentation memorable and effective for the public. It is a trick that the magnificent Spanish magician Juan Tamariz constantly introduces into his spontaneous performances. The vanish employed here is often referred to in the literature as the "rub-a-dub-dub vanish" and may be applied in many different ways within other tricks.

### *Effect*

An indifferent card changes into the spectator's freely chosen card. The performer offers to repeat the trick with any card named, but unfortunately the spectator reacts too slowly, and the card to be changed, to the surprise and astonishment of everyone, vanishes without a trace!

### *Construction, Management and Script*

Have a spectator freely choose and note a card. Then have it returned and control it to the top of the deck. Use one of the control methods described in Chapter 4 (*Volume 1*, page 65). "Now I will take a card that can't possibly be yours." As you say this, execute a double turnover, turning the top two cards face up for display on the deck. Then turn the double card face down again.

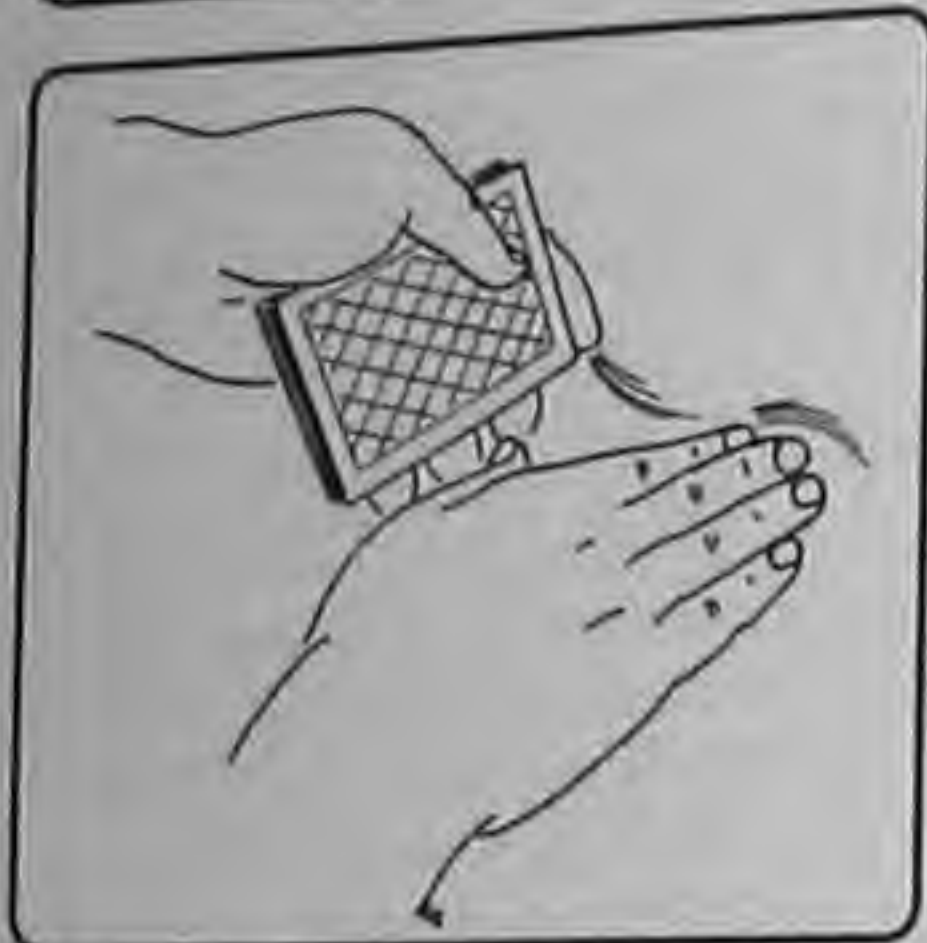
With your left thumb, push the top card to the right for half its width. Extend your right hand with the intention of completely covering the card, which you contact with the outer phalanx of your right little finger near the outer right corner.







Pivot your right hand palm down and to the left, pressing the sidejogged top card onto the table. As you do this, be sure to let the outer right corner of the card extend beyond the little finger for a brief moment.



Keep your right hand stationary, smoothly turning your left hand palm down and moving it off to the left the instant your right hand presses the card against the table. This is at present merely a feint, but it will shortly strengthen the deceptiveness of the vanish to be executed. If no table is available, you can perform this on top of the right thigh. (Please use your own!)

With your right hand, rub the card against the table for a few seconds as you ask the spectator to name the selection. When he does so, turn the card under your hand face up to reveal the freely selected card.

Once the reaction to the effect has died down, you continue: *"Of course, this will work with any card. Name any card that comes to mind, any one at all."* Display the spectator's selection again, and turn it over sidewise and face down on top of the deck. Be sure to use precisely the same actions employed for the earlier turnover of the double card. Now comes the actual vanish:

Once again, use your left thumb to push the top card to the right, halfway off the deck. With the exact same handling as before, place the right hand over the card and apparently press it onto the table, making sure that the outer right corner of the card projects briefly beyond the right little finger. At the instant you turn the right hand palm down, use the left thumb to pull the card back onto the deck. Immediately turn your left hand back up and move it to the left.

Pretend to rub the card against the table top with your right hand. As soon as the spectator complies with your request to name another card, look at her, then look at your right hand. *"Sorry, it's too late."* Raise your hand and show that the card has vanished. The spectators' reaction will be strong and immediate.



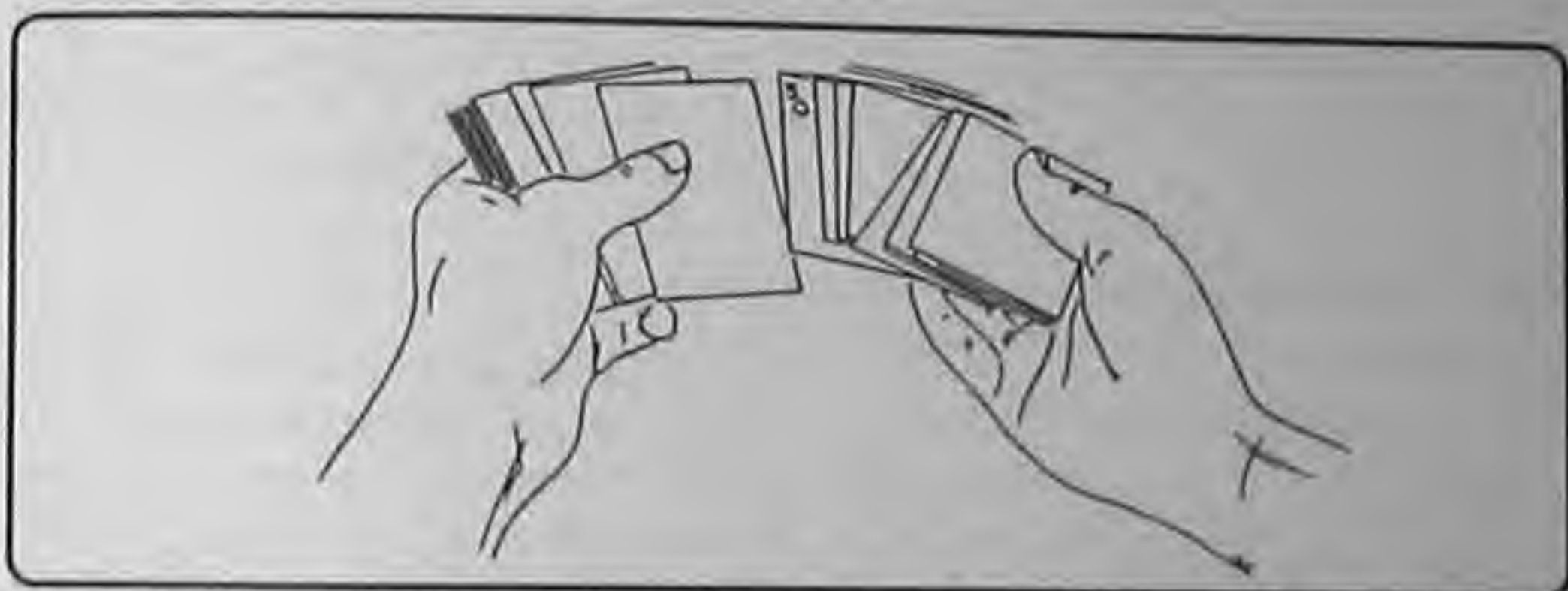
# The Ambitious Card

## Effect

A spectator freely chooses a card and the performer inserts it into the center of the deck. In response to a magical gesture, the card is seen to occupy the most important position in the deck: the top. Even though the spectator now signs the card, it always returns to the top, under increasingly impossible conditions.

## Construction, Management and Script

Have the cards shuffled by a spectator, then retrieve the deck and spread it face up between your hands while saying, *"Every card in this deck has its own identity—and that includes a unique personality. Please touch any card that appeals to you."* After spreading the first few cards, cull any card under the spread. This is accomplished by the spread cull (Volume 1, page 187). After spreading a few more cards, cull a second card. (An alternative to the spread cull is discussed in Final Note 2). When the spectator has touched a card, separate the spread at that point with the selected card—let's assume it is the Five of Spades—at the left end of the right hand's spread.



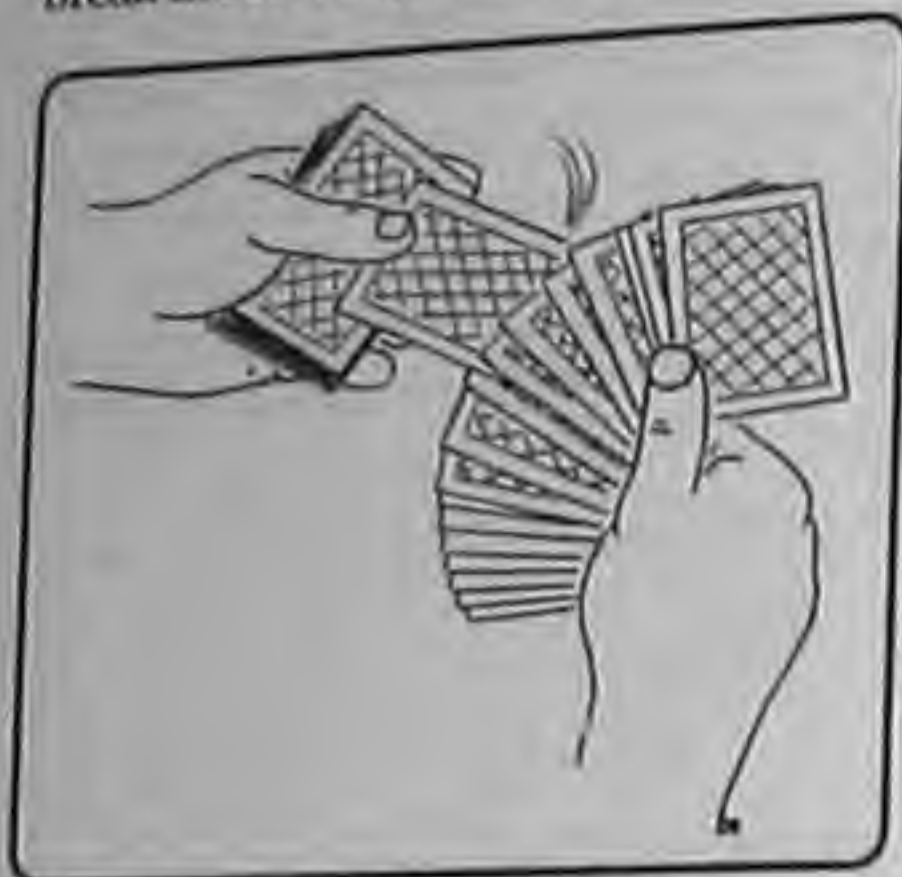
While the Five is apparently the lowermost card of the right hand's spread cards, the two culled cards lie hidden below it under the spread. Using the right hand's cards, flip the left hand's packet sidewise and face down. Next, with your left thumb, touch the index of the Five of Spades, saying, *"Of course, it's no coincidence that you happened to chose the Five of Spades, because it's a very ambitious card. It's true. I'll show you."* Square the right hand's packet somewhat by tapping its left side against the top of the left hand's packet; then turn it face down onto the deck. Take the top card (apparently the Five) and insert it into the center of the deck from the outer end. Square the cards and prepare for a double turn-over by taking a left little-finger break under the top two cards. *"Every time that card is placed in the center of the deck, it's not good enough for it. Because it's ambitious..."* After the interval of time it takes to say this, turn the double card face up on the deck. *"...it always rises to the top."*

*"Every time the card is placed in the center, it wants to go to the most important spot in the deck."* Turn the double card face down on the deck and insert the top card again into the center; then, a few seconds later, show that the Five has come back to the top.

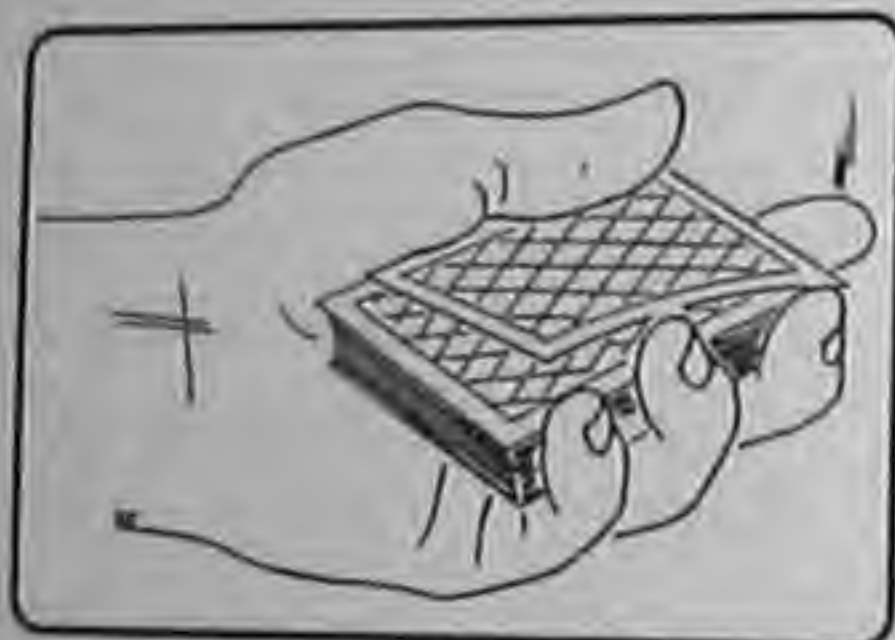


"I know what you're thinking, sir. He must have several Fives of Spades; otherwise that wouldn't be possible. So that you won't be disturbed by that suspicion, please sign your name boldly across the face of the card." Hand the spectator a broad-tipped, permanent marker for the purpose. As the spectator signs the face of the card, you continue, "That will assure that there is no other card like this in the known universe." Look at the signature. "Now we know where the card gets its ambition—from you!" If the spectator is someone you know, you may add several amusing comments at this point, always without causing your helper embarrassment, of course.

Place the signed card face up on the deck, which you hold face down in left-hand dealing position. Secretly buckle the bottom card (Volume 1, page 212) and take a left little-finger break above it as you say, "Of course you know it's all done with the sleeves."



Display the Five of Spades and, using the tip-over addition (Volume 1, page 206), flip the Five face down as you secretly add the indifferent bottom card over it. Next, make a broad one-handed fan with the right hand's cards (Volume 1, page 181) and use your left thumb to push the top card of the left hand's packet (apparently the Five of Spades) into the center of the right hand's fan.



"I push the card through the sleeve..." Press the projecting card against the crook of the left arm, pushing the card completely into the fan. As all attention is focused on this action, obtain a left little-finger break under the top card of the left hand's packet, then push the card about half an inch forward. Next, place the pad of the left index finger on the back of the card.



At the instant the card is pushed against your left arm and into the fan, press down with your left index finger, causing the Five of Spades to flip end over end and face up, finishing with it pressed against the bottom of its packet by the index finger. The illustration shows the audience's view.



"...and it comes out again at the bottom." Reassemble the cards and square them in the left hand. In doing this, place the Five of Spades face up on top of the face-down deck. You should now be holding the deck in left-hand dealing position.

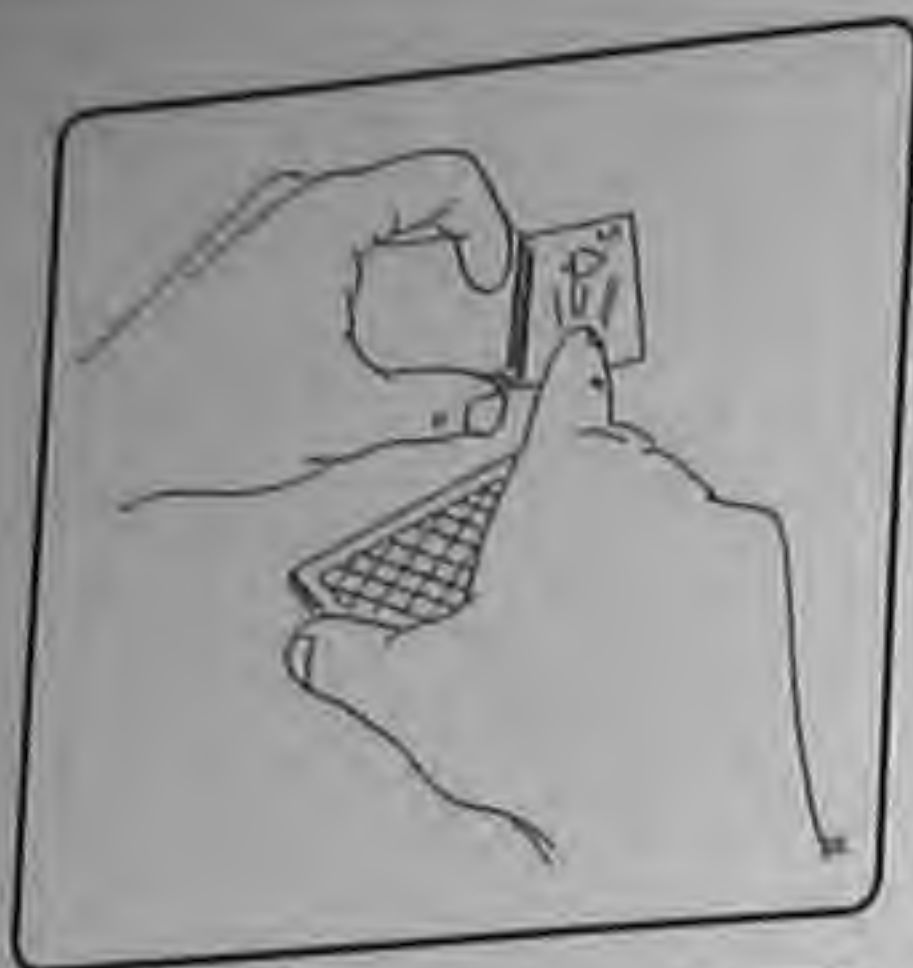
You will next perform a quite surprising sequence based on an Edward Marlo idea.<sup>27</sup> The handling I will give is one I devised roughly ten years ago for the purpose of clarifying the effect in the minds of the spectators.

Buckle the bottom two cards of the deck and take a left little-finger break above them. Then take the deck into right-hand end grip, transferring the break to the right thumb, and swing cut (*Volume 1*, page 27) the top half into your left hand.

Use the right hand's half to flip the Five of Spades sidewise and face down on the left hand's packet, then use the right middle and ring fingers to push the Five for about half its length over the outer end of the deck. This brings the right hand's packet directly over the left's. When the inner ends of the packets are in close alignment, it becomes easy for your left middle and ring fingers to catch the two cards below the right thumb's break and pull them down and square onto the left hand's packet.





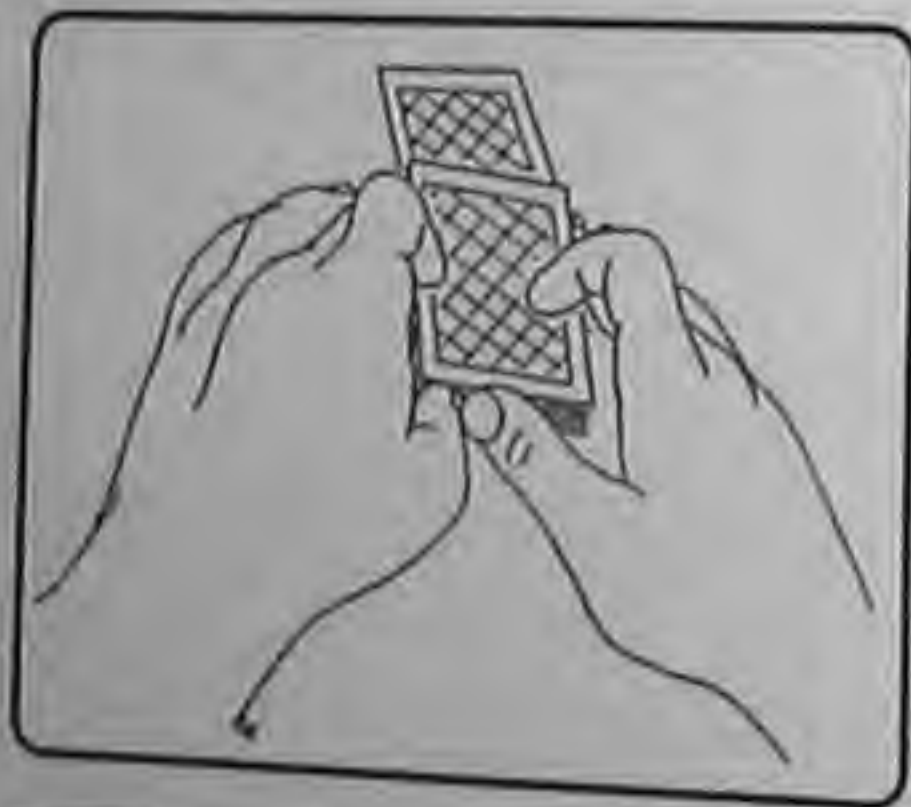


As soon as you have done this, turn your left hand palm down to display the face of the Five of Spades again.



Extend your left index finger and use it to push the Five of Spades flush with the left hand's packet. (If the card projects to far for the index finger to reach, you can start to push it in with the bottom of the right hand's packet, then finish with the left index finger.) The instant the card is flush with the packet, turn your left hand palm up and, using your left thumb, push the top card—apparently the Five of Spades—to the right and insert it into the center of the right hand's packet. To aid in the insertion, use the pad of your right index finger to lift about half of the right hand's cards slightly at the outer left corner. Do not push the left hand's card completely into the right hand's packet. Instead, leave it projecting for half its length from the outer end of the packet.

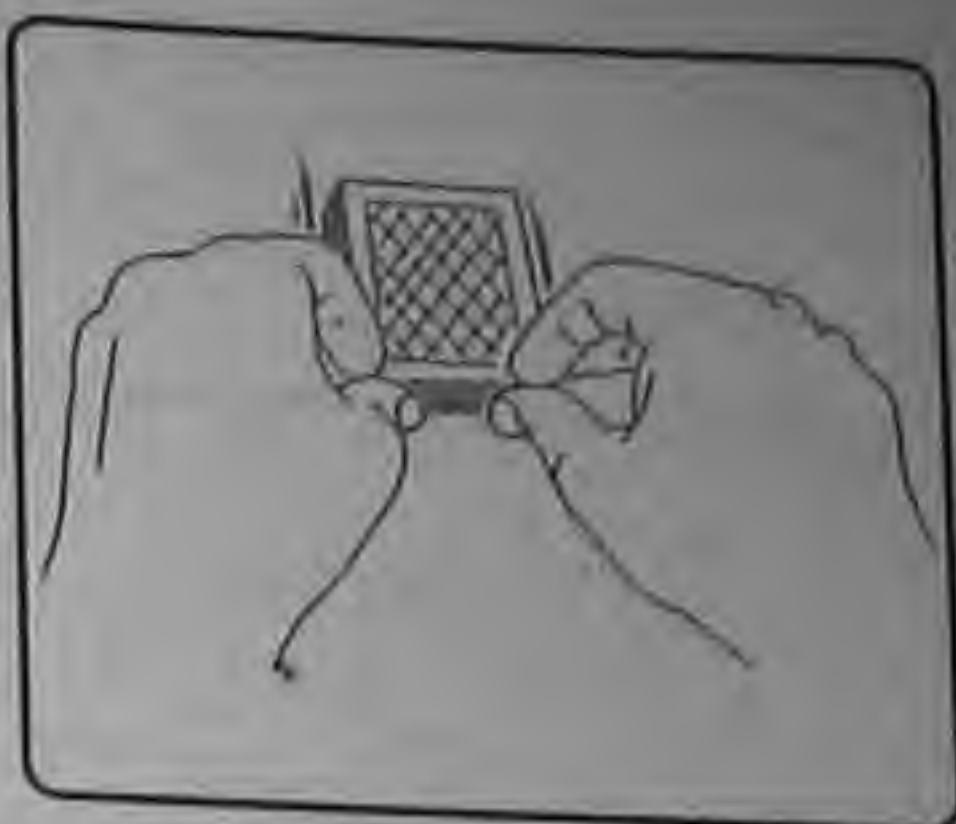
Properly executed, this sequence will leave the spectators convinced that the Five of Spades has never left their sight. Set the left hand's face-down packet to your left on the table as you position the right hand's packet forward on the table. Now slowly square the projecting card into the packet in the following fashion:



Place your hands palm down at their respective sides of the deck, with the pads of the middle fingers contacting the sides, near the outer corners. The tips of your thumbs rest centered at the inner end of the deck, and your index fingers curl slightly to lie very lightly on the top of the deck.



Now move the middle fingers and the thumbs simultaneously toward the inner corners of the deck, using the same actions you would to square the cards after a tabled riffle shuffle (*Volume 1*, page 108). But as you do this, exert firm pressure with the outer sides of the middle fingers against the sides of the deck. As the fingers move inward, they will draw the projecting card in with them, until it lies flush in the deck. This slightly mannered method of using just the ends of the fingers to square the card into the deck is neat and pleasing to watch.



As you do this, you say, *"I'll make it harder for me and easier for you—I'll just use half the deck. And yet the card still comes to the top."* Turn the top card of the packet you've just squared face up—it is not the ambitious card. *"Ah yes, that is not actually the top. This is the bottom half of the deck. The top of the top half is over there."* Pick up the packet on your left and, with the aid of the right thumb, quickly form a left little-finger break under the top two cards (*Volume 1*, page 129). To provide some time misdirection before executing a double turnover, point to the tabled packet: *"That would have been the top of the bottom."* Now turn the double card face up on its packet and show that the Five of Spades has again reached the top.

Reassemble the deck and square it, keeping the face-up double card on top. *"You signed the card on its face yourself—it is unmistakably your card. But as soon as the card is turned face down, all the cards look the same, and it might be switched for any other card. However, if I mark your card from the back, by bending it like this, then you'll be able to recognize it face up or face down."*

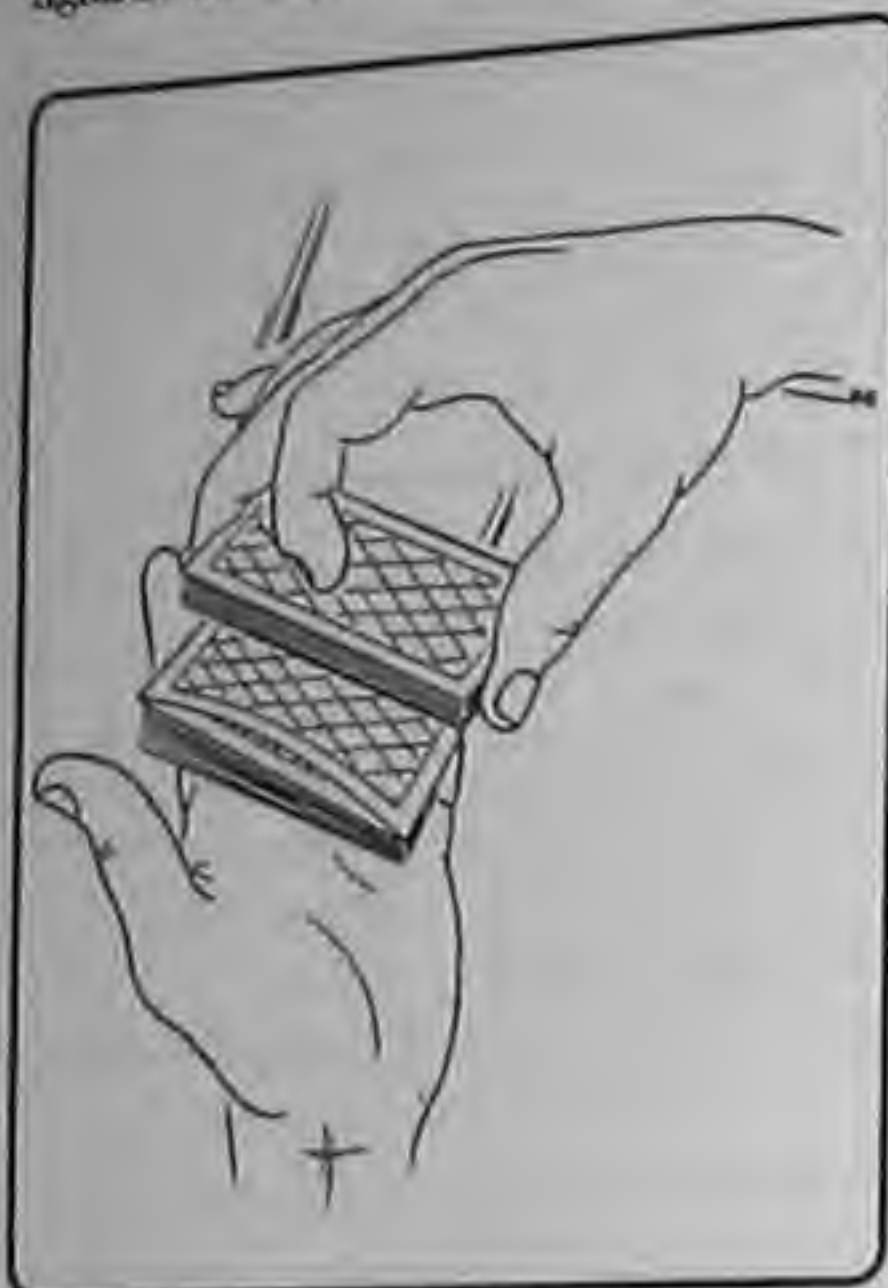
As you are saying this, turn the double card face down on the deck, catching a left little-finger break beneath it. Then execute a double lift (*Volume 1*, page 129), picking up the face-down double card in right-hand end grip and bow it sharply face-inward several times, keeping the card in motion as you display it both front and back. The constant motion prevents the double thickness of the cards from being apparent. This prepares you for the final ascension of the routine, Frederick Braue's classic pop-up card sequence.<sup>21</sup>



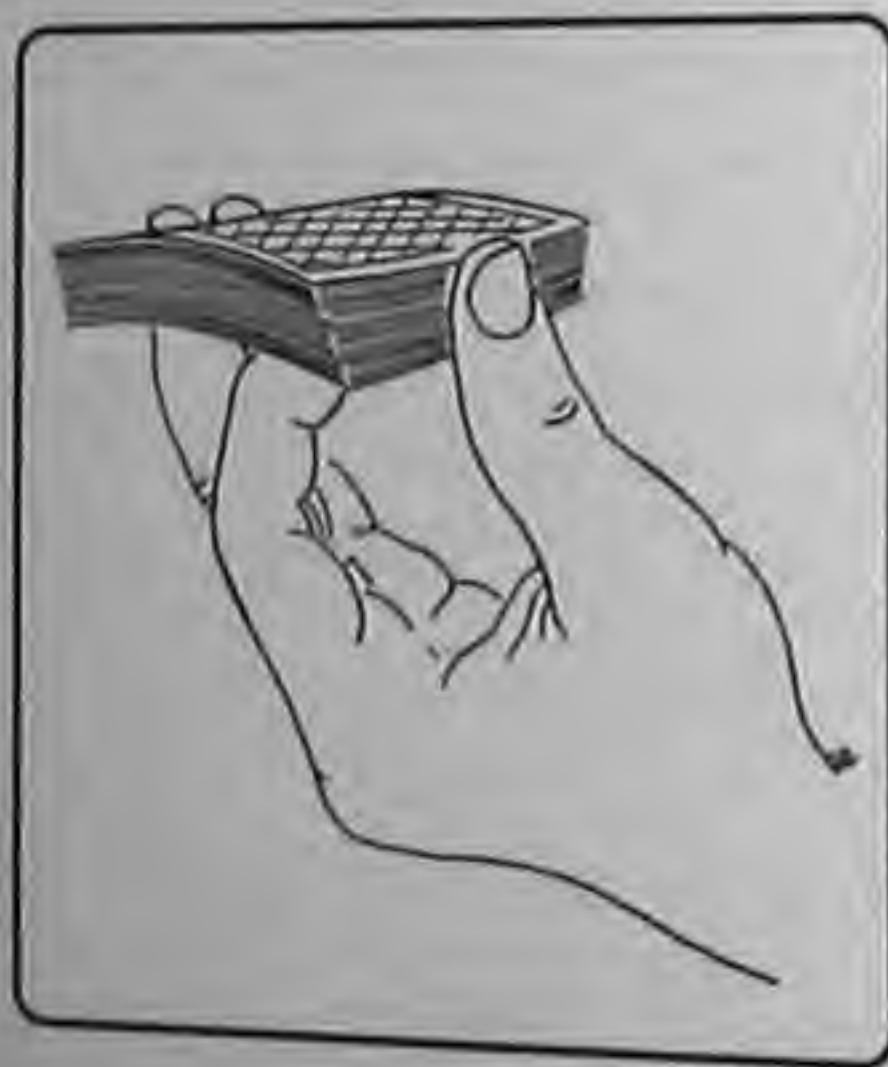
*"And if I place the card here on the table..."* Act as if you have spotted a speck of dust on the table. Replace the double card face down on the deck, freeing your right hand, which then brushes away the imaginary speck. Then bring the right hand back to the deck as your left thumb pushes over the top card. Take this card into your right hand and set it down



on the spot you have just cleaned. (The business of brushing away the speck provides an outward motivation for returning the card to the deck before you place it on the table.) As you remove the card from the deck and lay it on the table, the pronounced bend in the card is clearly obvious. Meanwhile, your left thumb keeps the signed selection pressed flat against the top of the deck.



You continue: "... *then this is the only bent card. All the other cards are straight.*" Grasp the deck in right-hand end grip and display it with one side turned toward the spectators. Use the right index finger, curled on the top of the deck, to prevent the top card from buckling upward. After exhibiting its straightness, replace the deck in left-hand dealing position and cut off the top half, holding it in right-hand end grip, continuing to subdue the bowed top card. Lower your left hand, with its packet, to the warped card on the table and, with your left thumb, draw the card onto the packet. Hold up the packet, clearly displaying the bent card on top, as you point out, "*You can see clearly that your card goes into the center.*" Slowly and carefully place the right hand's packet onto the left's, visibly flattening the warped card in the center of the deck.



Lift the deck to the left fingertips and hold it so that most of the spectators can see its right side. Apply firm pressure with the left thumb and middle and ring fingers on their respective sides of the deck to prevent the center of the warped Five of Spades on top from springing up.

"Watch and see for yourself how the card comes to the top." Press against the bottom of the deck with your left index finger, creating a bit of tension in the deck. The instant you relax the thumb, middle and ring fingers' pressure, the signed selection pops up, apparently jumping visibly to the top. This looks absolutely astonishing!

Slowly turn the card over to expose its signed face. The end.



### *Final Thoughts*

1. Always make sure to have the card signed. This gives the trick an extra dimension of impossibility.
2. You can eliminate the spread control at the start of the routine by having a card chosen, then control it to a position second from the top. Execute a double turnover and the action is underway.
3. At the conclusion, give the signed card to the spectator as lasting proof that this was not just a dream. You may want to date and sign the card.



## CHAPTER 22

### THE CRIMP

*"The old magician then bowed, and said that he too had a request: he would like the six courtiers to bring him the statue of a beautiful woman. The court was surprised at the old magician's request, for even if he had mastered the art of bringing forth a live woman from the stone, his deed could only equal that of his rival, without surpassing it; and by virtue of being second, he would seem only an imitator, without daring or originality."*

Steven Millhauser

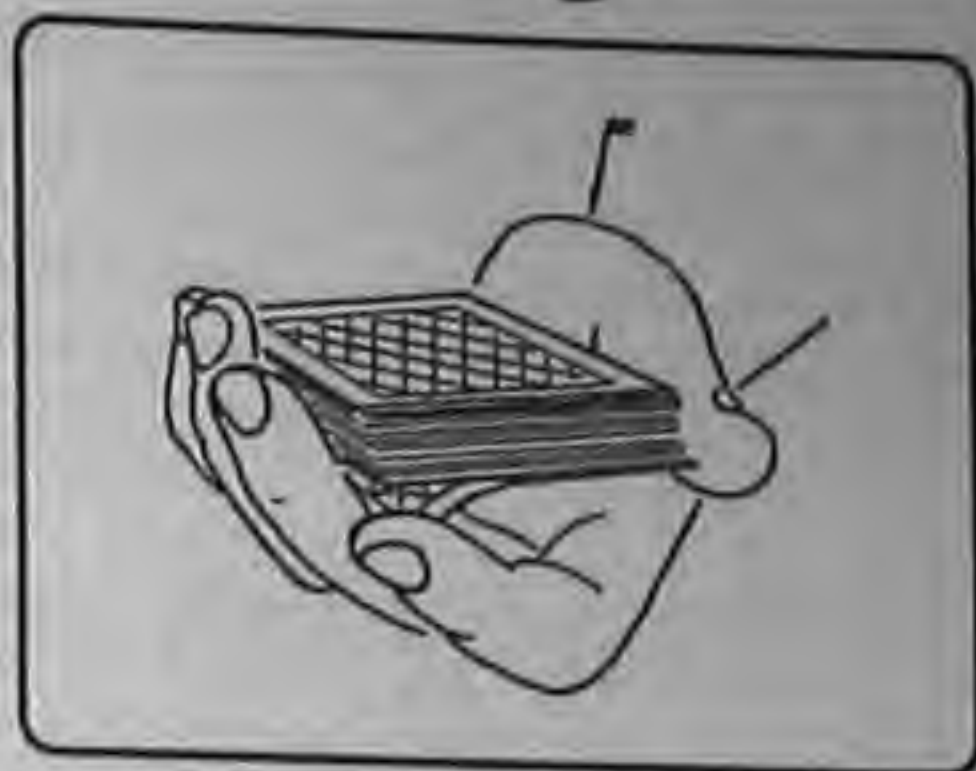


A crimp is a slight bend in a card, placed there to help locate the card later. The bend is often in one of the corners, but in principle it can be placed in any part of the card. Contrary to common belief, a crimp when correctly applied does not damage the card at all, provided the cards are of good quality.



## Crimping with the Index Finger

Hold the slightly unsquared deck in left-hand dealing position and bring your right hand over the cards to square them, assuming end-grip position. As soon as the outer end of the deck is masked by the right middle, ring and little fingers, place the tip of your left index finger at the outer right corner of the bottom card. Then, with the index finger, bend the corner down about ninety degrees and release it. The illustration shows a view from the front without right-hand cover.



This places a bend in the corner. After installing the crimp, perform an all-around square-up of the deck (*Volume 1*, page 20), bringing the crimped corner to the inner left, where it is well hidden.

### Check Points

1. You will find this easier if you first use the pad of your left index finger to push the bottom card a fraction of an inch to the right.
2. Using the same hand positions, the left little finger can crimp the bottom card at its inner right corner.

## Crimping with the Heel of the Thumb

This technique is executed with just one hand and, since the crimp will be placed directly in the inner left corner, no all-around square-up is required at the conclusion. Despite the good cover this technique enjoys, you should take advantage of your free right hand to direct attention away from the deck.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and lift the deck slightly with the base of your left index finger, while the heel of the thumb separates the bottom card from the deck at the inner left corner. The natural bevel of the deck in dealing position facilitates this. Increase the pressure from the heel of the thumb downward and to the right, thus crimping the inner left corner of the bottom card.

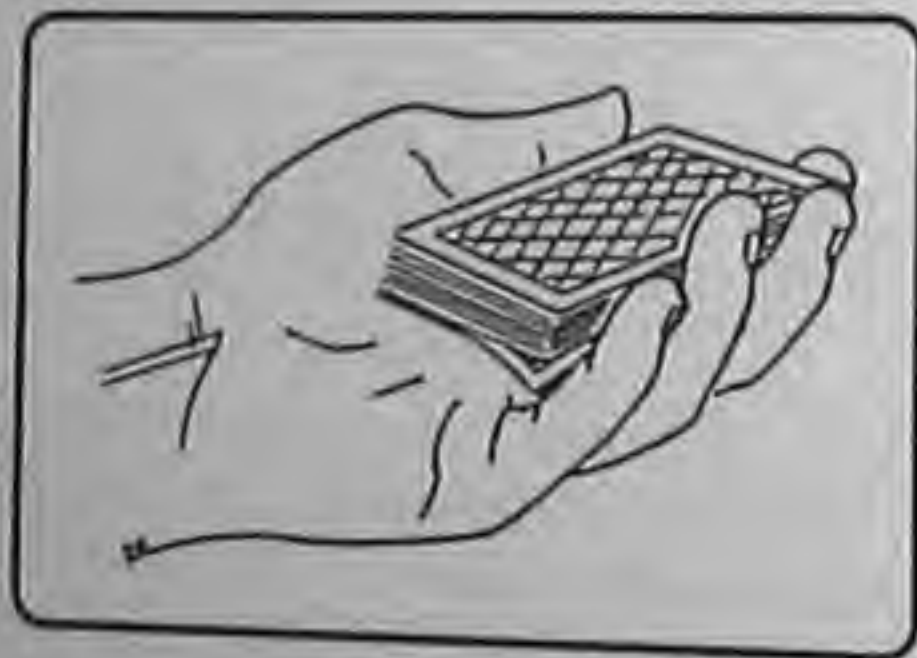
This technique is particularly well suited to those circumstances in which the crimped corner will later be located using a Charlier Cut (*Volume 1*, page 172), since the deck is then opened along the left side. On the other hand, ribbon spreading the face-down deck from left to right is not recommended, since the crimped corner will be visible.

## Crimping with an Overhand Shuffle

In contrast to the previous methods, with this technique the outer left corner is crimped.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position; then, with your right hand, shift the deck to a vertical position to begin an overhand shuffle. As the right hand lifts the deck for the first shuffle action, use your left thumb to draw off the top card. The outer left corner of the card is crimped in this action by pressure between the left thumb and the middle phalanx of the left index finger.



An all-around square-up after the shuffle will bring the crimped corner to the inner right.



# Cutting to a Crimped Card

It is often necessary to cut the deck at a crimped card, or to separate the cards at the crimp with the right thumb, so that a left little-finger break may be taken above or below the crimped card. In addition to a light grip, several other details are responsible for the successful execution of this action:

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position with the crimped corner at the inner end. Then take the deck in right-hand end grip and lift it a fraction of an inch. Relax the right hand's grip at the inner end, causing all the cards below the crimp to fall back into your left hand.

You can now lift the entire deck with your right hand, while maintaining the break with your thumb, or you can place the right hand's portion on the table, depending on the requirements of the routine. Since you barely lifted the deck initially, it will seem to the spectators as though you have simply cut the cards.

## Applications

- You can use the card with the crimped corner as a key card. This gives you the advantage of being able to cut to the key card anytime, eliminating the need to go through the deck face up to find and control the key card.
- As a guard against unpleasant troublemakers, you can control a chosen card, then crimp its corner. Now the deck can be freely shuffled by anyone, and yet you can bring the card to the top or bottom with a single cut.



# A TRICK USING THE CRIMP

## Transposition Extraordinary

### Effect

A spectator thinks of a number and notes the card located at that position in the deck. The performer draws an indifferent card from the deck, shows it and sets it aside face down on the table. The two cards then magically change places! When the spectator counts down to the thought-of number in the deck, the magician's card is there, and the card on the table is now the spectator's card!

### Construction, Management and Script

This trick comes from Hugard and Braue's *Expert Card Technique*.<sup>22</sup> I've made a few small handling adjustments to it.

Crimp the inner right corner of the bottom card and overhand shuffle this card to the top of the deck, using the technique taught on page 253. Thanks to the corner crimp, you needn't form a break during this shuffle, since the crimp automatically provides you with the gap you need.

*"I want you to think of a number. It can be any number, but in the interest of time, make it a number between ten and twenty."* The spectator is then asked to deal that many cards into a face-down pile on the table, to note the last card dealt and to place the rest of the deck on top of the tabled packet. You illustrate the procedure by dealing several cards, looking at the last one dealt, and dropping the deck onto the tabled pile. This brings the corner-crimped card to the bottom of the deck, while at the same time making it perfectly clear what the spectator is to do.

Turn away while the spectator carries out this procedure. Warn him to count and deal silently, so that you can't hear how many cards are dealt. Then give him the deck in such manner that the crimped corner lies at the inner end when he holds the cards. This prevents an attentive member of the audience from spotting it.

When the spectator has noted a card and buried it, turn around and give the deck a quick overhand shuffle that doesn't disturb the order of the bottom twenty or so cards. Let's assume the spectator has noted the Ace of Clubs. *"I'm going to take a card from the deck too."* Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position with the crimped corner at the inner end. Using your right thumb, riffle the inner ends of the cards from bottom to top until you reach the crimped card. Briefly hold a visible break under it with your left little finger as you reach into the break with your right index finger and remove the card directly under the break. This is the card noted by the spectator. The fact that you need to look closely at the deck to do what you purport to do makes it easy for you to find the card under the crimp.

*"Of course, there is one chance in fifty-two that I have accidentally chosen your card."* As you say this, take a left little-finger break under the top card. Place the right hand's card on top of the deck and turn the double card face up, revealing an indifferent card, for



example, the Eight of Diamonds. *"Is this your card?"* Note: You must justify the placing of the card on the deck by your need to free the right hand to make some clarifying gesture. *"No? Good, then I'll set it aside over here."* Turn the double card face down and place the top card (the spectator's selection) on the table. Placing the empty card case on top of the tabled card will prevent a spectator from turning the card over prematurely.

Form a left little-finger break under the crimped card (see "Cutting to a Crimped Card", page 349). This procedure can be covered by saying something like *"Your card is somewhere among the remaining fifty-one cards."* You now either execute a pass (page 297) or simply double cut to the break (page 323). The pass is the more economical technique, but if you prefer the open cut, follow it with a false shuffle in which you maintain the order of the top stock.

As far as secret technique is concerned, the trick is over. You now bring it to a dramatic conclusion as follows: *"Your card is somewhere in the deck. Exactly where it is, nobody knows, because you only thought of a number at the beginning. On the table is my Eight of Diamonds. What you are about to witness borders on the impossible. I shall take the identity of your thought-of card and toss it to my card on the table. My Eight of Diamonds now has two identities. He will, therefore, forfeit his own and give it to your card, which was momentarily without one."* Underscore your words with appropriate gestures. *"What was the number that you merely thought of?"* Hand the deck to the spectator with instructions to count down to that number and turn up the card found there. When he does this, your Eight of Diamonds is revealed. *"And what was the name of your card? The Ace of Clubs?"* Turn the tabled card face up—it really is the Ace of Clubs!

## CHAPTER 23

# THE GLIMPSE

*"Art is, in fact, a magic incantation."*

Nikos Kazantzakis





Glimpse techniques secretly allow you to see the index of one or more cards. A number of these techniques were originated by crooked gamblers for use at the gaming tables. The glimpse can form part of a natural handling sequence or be executed as a secret sleight that requires no external reality to hide it. In this chapter we will discuss methods for glimpsing a card on the top, on the bottom and in the middle of the deck.

Some remarks are valid for all glimpse techniques, so they will be made here at the outset. Try to keep these basic principles in mind as you study the glimpse techniques that follow.

- The farther the deck is held from the body, the easier the glimpse. If the card or the deck is too close, the line of sight makes too sharp an angle and the sharper the angle, the more discrete your gaze must be.
- Never look directly at the card index. Look at a spectator or an object on the table, making sure that the card index to be glimpsed is in your line of sight and therefore in the same field of vision, which will be sufficient.

## Top-card Riffle Glimpse

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. You are going to glimpse the top card, under which you are holding a left little-finger break. The glimpse takes place during the following handling: Bring your right hand over the deck in end-grip position, and gently lift the cards to elevated dealing position. With your right hand, begin to riffle the inner ends of the cards from bottom to top. The illustration catches this action when about half the cards have been riffled off the thumb. This is the moment when the opening of the break is largest, permitting you to glimpse the inner index of the top card.



After getting your glimpse, gently lower the deck back into dealing position. You may wish to square the cards casually before lowering them.

### Check Points

1. The riffle should be done casually and at a moment of relaxed attention. You might briefly riffle the deck, glimpsing the card, then spread the cards from hand to hand as you remark, *"Your card is somewhere in the deck."*
2. It is important that, at the end of the riffle, you not release the top card by itself. The glimpse takes place about six cards short of the top. Stop the riffle there. Otherwise a singular "click" will be audible and the card will be visibly and needlessly bent.
3. This riffle should be a gentle and nearly noiseless handling. In general, you should guard carefully against casual riffling of the deck becoming a "nervous tick". I've mentioned this during the description of the riffle (*Volume 1*, page 34), but it bears repeating, as this is an all-too-common affliction among card workers.

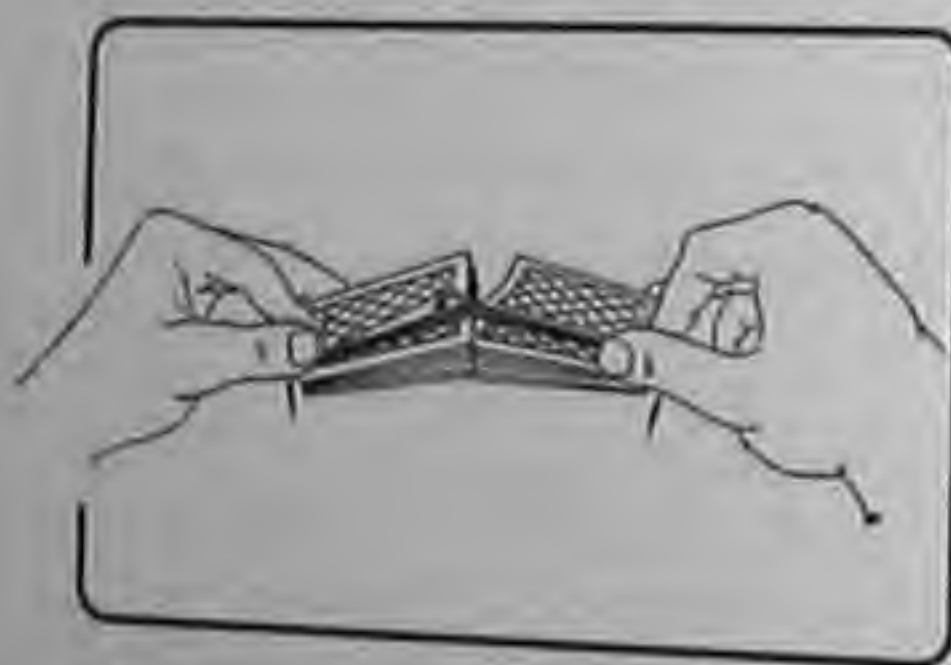


## Top-card Double Lift Glimpse



This technique uses a double lift to inform you of the identity of the second card from the top. As you hold the cards in left-hand dealing position, turn the top card over side-wise and face up onto the deck, catching a left little-finger break under the next card at the same time. Pick up the double card in right-hand end grip and use the left side of the double card to flip the next card side-wise and face up. In doing this, bow the center of the double card downward slightly. This allows you to glimpse the index of the under-surface of the double card. Use the double card to flip the card on top of the deck face down again. Then replace the double card onto the deck and turn the face-up top card face down there. This handling must be justified within the context of the presentation.

## Top-card Riffle Shuffle Glimpse



The deck is face down on the table in preparation for a riffle shuffle. Hold a left thumb break under the top card, which you are about to glimpse. With your right hand, cut the bottom half of the deck to the right and begin the riffle shuffle. When the left thumb has riffled off about half its cards, the break will be its largest, making it easy to glimpse the top card. The principle is identical to that used in the top-card riffle glimpse.

This glimpse can also be executed without benefit of the initial break. In this case, use your left index finger to push the top card a fraction of an inch inward, so that the card index can be glimpsed. This latter technique comes from the arsenal of the crooked gambler and, while it is probably centuries old, it is still very deceptive when executed well. Some performers prefer a closed riffle shuffle when using a jogged card, to assure that the jog isn't visible to the audience. However, the jog used is so small, I don't find this necessary. This is especially true if the cards you use have a borderless back pattern.



## Bottom Card All-around Square-up Glimpse

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and perform an all-around square-up (*Volume 1*, page 20). At the moment the deck has been rotated ninety degrees clockwise its top and bottom surfaces will be turned vertically and you can easily glimpse either index of the bottom card. Keep in mind that the cards are in this position for only a fraction of a second and that it is a transitory phase in the larger squaring action. Ultimately the deck will have turned through one-hundred-eighty degrees and is once again face down in left-hand dealing position.



## Situational Bottom Card Glimpses

Glimpsing the bottom card often requires no actual technique, but simply results from a carefully calculated handling of the deck in a given situation. I shall describe several such handlings here, some of which result from the flow of action in a trick and others as an expression of one's personal style in handling the deck.

**SITUATION:** This deceptive idea, while undoubtedly ancient, was (to the best of my knowledge) first described in print by Frank Lane, an American magic dealer who flourished in the 1930s.<sup>23</sup> You are going to retrieve the deck just shuffled by a spectator. Take the cards by grasping them at one end in your right hand, thumb on the face, fingers on the back. If you do this with your arm extended, you can glimpse an index of the bottom card as you move the cards in toward you. Incidentally, this technique can be reversed to glimpse the bottom card as you hand the deck to a spectator.







SITUATION: You are holding the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. Point to your watch with your right index finger as you say something like *"This trick takes exactly thirty seconds—it is one of the fastest in the world."* In pointing at the face of your watch you will automatically turn your left hand palm down, which allows you to glimpse the outer index of the bottom card. If you want to avoid giving a spectator an accidental glimpse of the bottom card too, move your left index finger next to your middle finger on the side of the deck, placing the fingers together. You will still be able to glimpse the card through the opening formed by your index finger and thumb.



SITUATION: The principle just described can be applied to many other situations. You can move an object aside with your left hand, point to a card on the table, beckon to a spectator to come closer, or guide a spectator to one side. What is important is that your left hand be turned palm down in a natural and justified manner.



SITUATION: While holding the deck face down in left-hand dealing position, use your right hand to pull up your left sleeve, then take the deck into right-hand end grip. Now use your left hand to pull up your right sleeve, affording you the opportunity to glimpse the outer index of the bottom card.

## Center-card Glimpse

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position with a left little-finger break secured under the card to be glimpsed in the center of the deck. Form a step at the break (*Volume 1*, page 33) and execute an all-around square-up of the deck. As with the bottom card all-around square-up glimpse (page 357), the index of the lowermost card of the upper packet can be glimpsed when the deck has been rotated ninety degrees.



### Final Notes

1. As noted in the preceding chapter on the crimp, it is recommended that you glimpse a previously unknown selected card immediately after the control. Then, no matter what happens, you know the identity of the card. See also the thoughts on this in the section on "outs" in Chapter 27 (page 461).
2. Glimpses allow you to learn the identity of a key card. Consequently, after studying this chapter you should reexamine Chapter 10 (*Volume 1*, page 135) with the idea of applying these techniques to the key-card strategies explained there.



# TRICKS WITH THE GLIMPSE

## Card Catcher

### Effect

A card is chosen and shuffled into the deck, which is then divided into two packets, one face down, the other face up. The performer proceeds to divine the name of the chosen card. He then uses a riffle shuffle to interweave the ends of the two packets, one still face down, the second face up. When he pulls the packets apart, one card is found face down in the face-up packet. It is, oddly enough, the previously selected card!

### Construction, Management and Script

The plot of this trick belongs to two past lights of Chicago card magic, Edward Marlo and Carmen D'Amico.<sup>24</sup>

Have a card chosen, noted and returned to the deck. Control it to the top (*Volume 1*, Chapter 4, page 65) and, in squaring the deck, glimpse the selection as you riffle (page 355).



"I don't sense that your card is in this group. Please tell me if I'm right." Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position, then take it into right-hand end grip and swing cut (*Volume 1*, page 27) the top half of the deck into the left hand. Flip the right hand's cards sidewise and face up onto the left hand's and spread through all the face-up cards, so that the spectators can verify that the chosen card is not among them. Spread through a few of the face-down cards as well.

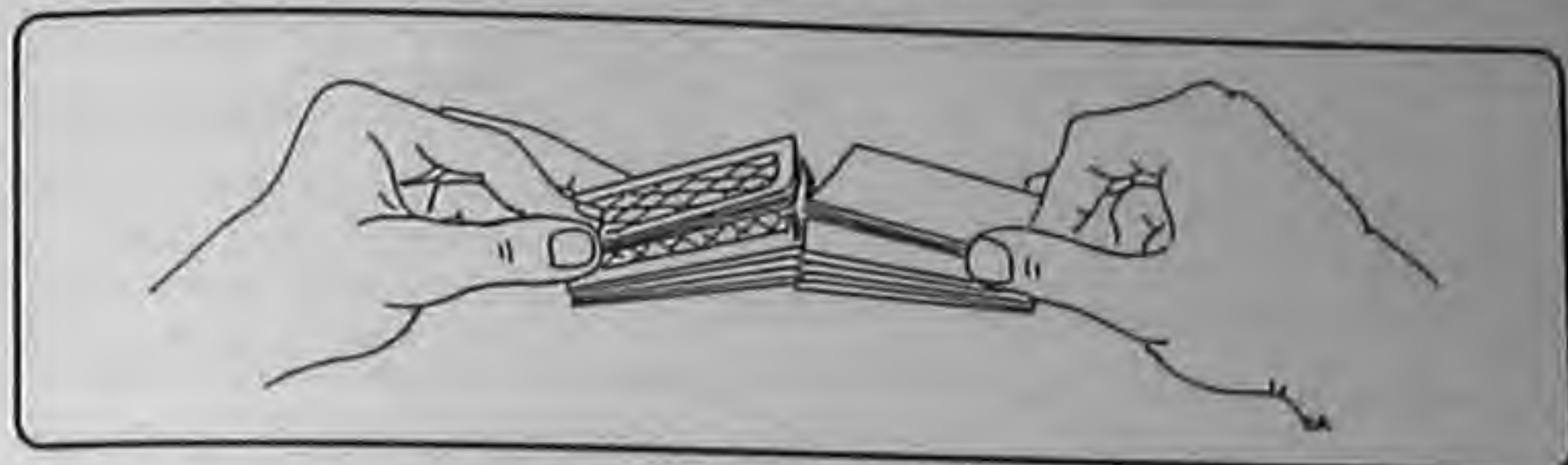
Square the deck, taking a left little-finger break under the uppermost face-down card (see "Forming a Little-finger Break Under Multiple Cards", *Volume 1*, page 31). This card is, of course, the selection.

Cut the cards above the break onto the table. Spread the rest of the cards with their faces toward you. "The process of elimination tells me that your card must be in this half. Please concentrate on your card." Look at the cards thoughtfully, then upjog one card in the center of the spread. "Your card was a red card—a Heart—the Five of Hearts, correct?" The card you upjog is an indifferent card, held so that no one can see its identity, but the card you name is the chosen card glimpsed earlier. As soon as the spectator confirms your statement, push the upjogged card back into the spread. The trick is apparently over.

This "miscal" is a clever but seldom applied principle. Performed with confidence, it is totally convincing. How else could you have known which card was chosen? Furthermore, the audience does not know what comes next.



Square the cards in your hands and set them face down on the table with one side facing you. Pick up the face-up packet, being careful not to expose the face-down bottom card, and perform an overhand shuffle, shuffling off about half the packet and throwing the rest on top. This places the face-down selection in the center of the face-up packet. Place this packet face up on the table next to the face-down packet and, with a riffle shuffle, weave the innermost adjacent corners of both packets together.



Then, keeping the packets angled obliquely with respect to each other, push them together.



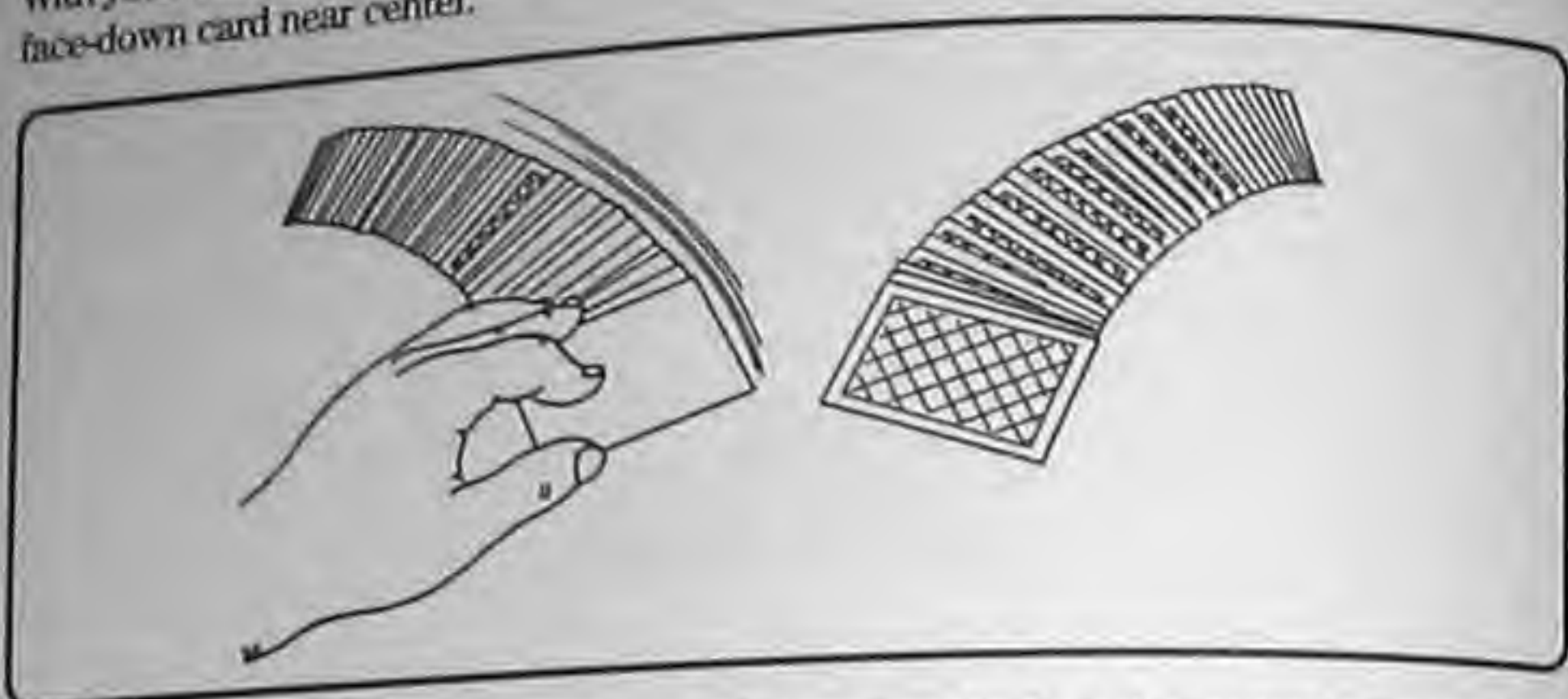
Continue to push the angled packets further together until they pass through each other, the left hand's packet exiting from the right's and vice versa. Finally, regrip the packets, shifting your left fingers to the outer left corners of the face-up packet, and the right fingers to the outer right corners of the face-down packet, and pull them apart.



In this fashion, the packets have been riffled together and openly pulled through each other. Ribbon spread the right hand's face-down packet in an inward sweep on the table and turn the spread face up (see "The Ribbon Spread Turnover", *Volume 1*, page 183). "Your card, the Five of Hearts, has vanished from this half of the deck." Give the spectators time to confirm this. Then turn the spread face down again, in preparation for the final display.



With your left hand, ribbon spread the face-up packet in an inward arc, revealing a single face-down card near center.



Slowly turn the card face up toward yourself, then turn its face dramatically toward the audience—it is the chosen card!

### Final Notes

1. After glimpsing the card, you can have the deck shuffled by a spectator, then control the selection to the top afterward using the spread cull (*Volume 1*, page 187). This is a more convincing procedure, but it takes a bit longer.
2. If you have mastered the spread cull, you can introduce an additional subtlety. When you spread the cards face up between your hands to show that the selection isn't in the first half of the deck, cull any card you like under the spread. Then, as you close the spread, insert the culled card under the first face-down card (the selection) and immediately separate the squared upper portion of the deck. Now the right hand's packet can also be shown casually from the back, as the culled card provides cover for the reversed selection. Continue as previously described.
3. If it makes you nervous, you can omit the miscalling of the card. But it is precisely this detail that makes the trick so extraordinarily effective.

# Impossible!

## Effect

This effect is essentially a card location. But the conditions under which the card is chosen and lost in the deck are so fair that the spectators, experts included, can only come to the conclusion that it is truly "Impossible!"

## Preparation

Sort the cards into separate suits and arrange each suit in Ace-to-King order from face to the back. Then placed the four ordered packets together in any order. (Those readers familiar with one of the memorized deck arrangements described in other works may use it instead, if desired.)

## Construction, Management and Script

Give the deck a complete false shuffle (see the G. W. Hunter shuffle, page 259, or the optical shuffle, page 260) and let a spectator cut the cards as you direct your introductory remarks to the audience. The cut doesn't disturb the relative order of the cards; it only changes the start and end points.

Place the deck face down in front of a spectator with the request that a packet of any size be cut off. The spectator is to note the bottom card of the cut-off packet, then thoroughly shuffle the packet. She next inserts the shuffled packet somewhere in the center of the rest of the deck. Known only to you is the fact that the card now on top of the deck is the card that rested directly under the chosen card in your arrangement.

*"Now shuffle the cards thoroughly. You can shuffle them however you like."* Demonstrate this by first giving the deck a riffle shuffle, glimpsing the top card in the process, then give the cards a quick overhand shuffle and hand them to the spectator. Let's assume the glimpsed card was the Three of Hearts. If the cards were arranged in suits from Ace to King, face to back, then the spectator's card must be the Four of Hearts. Divine the card with your most impressive "telepathic abilities". Your shuffling and the spectator's has destroyed the prearrangement and with it any evidence of your method.



## THE REVERSE

Kent Nagano



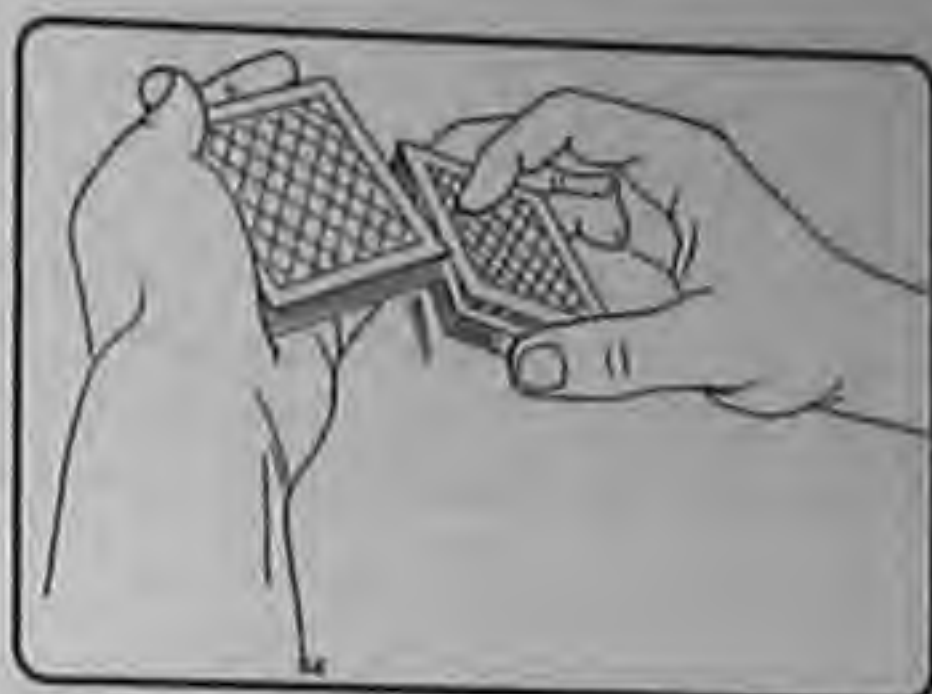
In this chapter we will examine techniques used to turn one or more cards secretly face up in a face-down deck. Techniques in which the reversal of cards takes place in the course of another overt action will be distinguished from those in which no action is apparent.



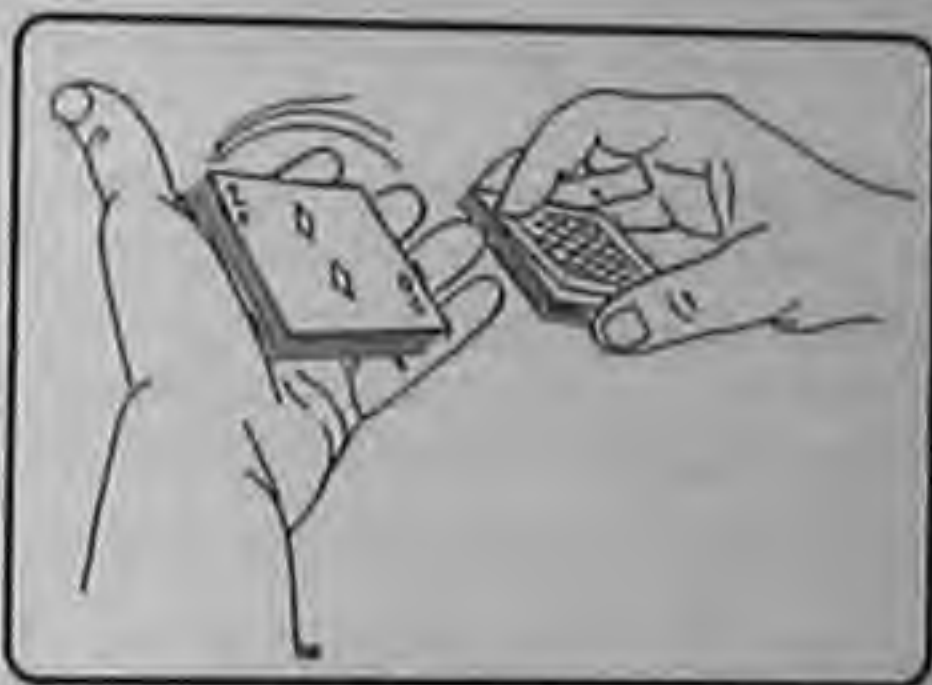
## The Braue Reverse

In this technique the top card is reversed and secretly brought to the center of the deck in the course of cutting the deck and turning it face up. The reversed card may also be brought to the bottom of the face-up deck. Or you can use it to reverse a card in the center of the deck. This classic technique was created by Frederick Braue.<sup>25</sup>

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and obtain a left little-finger break under the top card. Grasp the deck in right-hand end grip, transferring the break to your right thumb; then, without releasing the break, carry the top half of the deck to the right.



Using the left side of the right hand's packet, flip the other packet sidewise and face up in your left hand.



Slip the left hand's now face-up cards onto the right hand's packet and immediately use the right hand to cut all the cards above the break (the face-up cards with the uppermost face-down card beneath them) to the right. Once again use the right hand's packet to flip the left hand's cards sidewise and face up. Place the left hand's cards under those in the right hand. The original top card is now reversed in the approximate center of the deck. In some cases you will next want to turn the deck face down.





## Check Points

1. When you make the second cut, if you place the left hand's newly face-up cards onto the right hand's packet instead of beneath it, the reversed card will be brought to the bottom of the face-up deck.
2. Of course, if you begin with the deck face up, you can use the same procedure to reverse the card at its face as you turn the deck face down.
3. The cutting procedure can be carried out casually without comment or it can be accompanied by a remark such as *"Your card could be anywhere in the deck, perhaps it's the King of Hearts or the Seven of Clubs,"* naming the cards that come into view.
4. Let's assume you are holding a break above a specific card near the center of the deck. You can use the Braue reversal to reverse this card secretly. With your right hand, cut off the cards above the break. Form a left little-finger break under the top card of the left hand's packet as you flip the right hand's cards face up onto the left hand's cards. With your right hand, cut off all the cards above the break and use these cards to flip the left hand's cards sidewise and face up. Place the right hand's cards either over or under the left hand's cards, depending on whether you desire the reversed card to be in the center or on the bottom of the face-up deck.

## Double Lift Reverse

In this reverse, two cards are turned face up, displayed, and turned face down again. In the course of this overt action, the second card from the top of the deck is covertly reversed. This reversal is the result of a collaboration between Dr. Jacob Daley and S. Leo Horowitz.<sup>26</sup> Both men were magicians of remarkable skill and cleverness, who flourished in the United States during the first half of the twentieth century.



Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and, with your left thumb, push the top card to the right. Further extend the thumb, pushing the second card from the top a fraction of an inch to the right as well, as if doing a double push-over (Volume 1, page 211). With your right hand, grasp the top card.



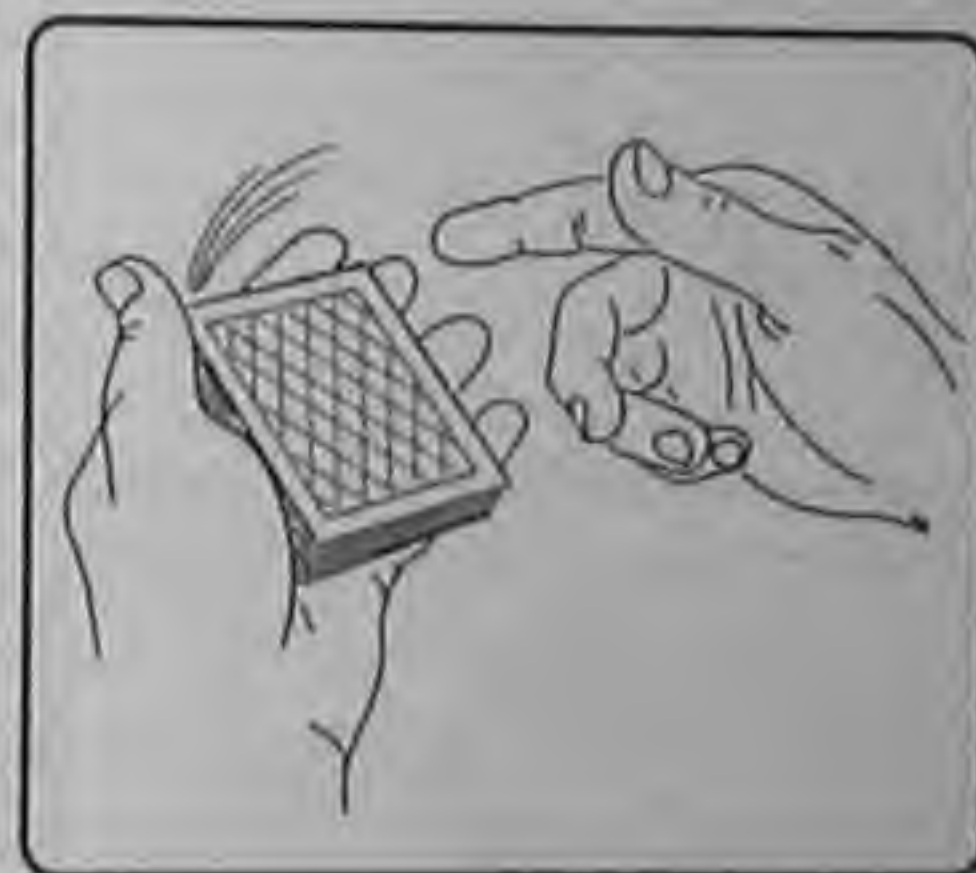
Flip this card sidewise and face up onto the deck. A fraction of a second before this, use your left thumb to pull back the card second from the top, forming a left little-finger break beneath it. The face-up top card now lies square on the deck and you are holding a break beneath two cards.



Take both cards as one in right-hand end grip and move them to the right. As soon as the right hand's double card leaves the deck, use your left thumb to push the next card of the deck to the right and, with the left side of the right hand's double, flip the third card sidewise and face up onto the deck.



With your left thumb, push the face-up card on the deck to the right and take it under the double card. Hold the three-card packet (believed to be only two cards) above the deck and square it between your left thumb and middle finger. Then hold the packet momentarily between these fingers as you alter the right hand's grip, taking the three cards by their right side, thumb above, fingers below. Flip the three sidewise and face down onto the deck. You have apparently displayed the top two cards, but in the process you have in fact reversed the real second card.

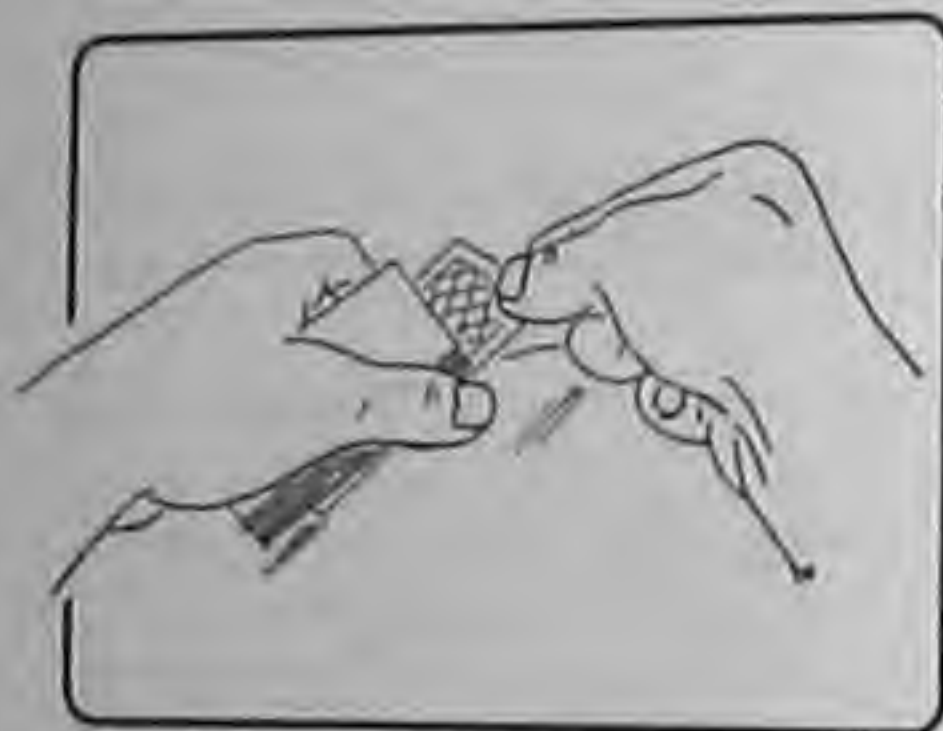


# Double Turnover Reverse

This, like the double lift reverse, is an invention of Dr. Daley;<sup>27</sup> and like that reverse, two cards are displayed. This time, however, in the course of the display, the top card of the deck is secretly reversed, rather than the second card from the top. The justification for this handling, as for the previous one, must flow logically from the context of the routine.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. The card to be reversed is the top card of the deck. Turn over the top two cards as one and let the double card fall face up onto the deck. Depending on the context of the routine, you might say, *"Your card is somewhere between the Five of Spades..."* Here you name the card displayed.



Without turning the face-up double card face down, turn your left hand palm down. This results in a position quite similar to that for the glide. With your right index finger, pull the resultant lowermost card of the deck, the Five of Spades, off the end of the deck.



Turn the Five of Spades face up and tap it on the card at the face of the deck: *"...and the Two of Hearts."* Place the face-up Five of Spades flush underneath the face-up deck and turn the left hand palm up. You apparently hold a face-down deck in your left hand, but in fact the original top card is now reversed under the new top card.



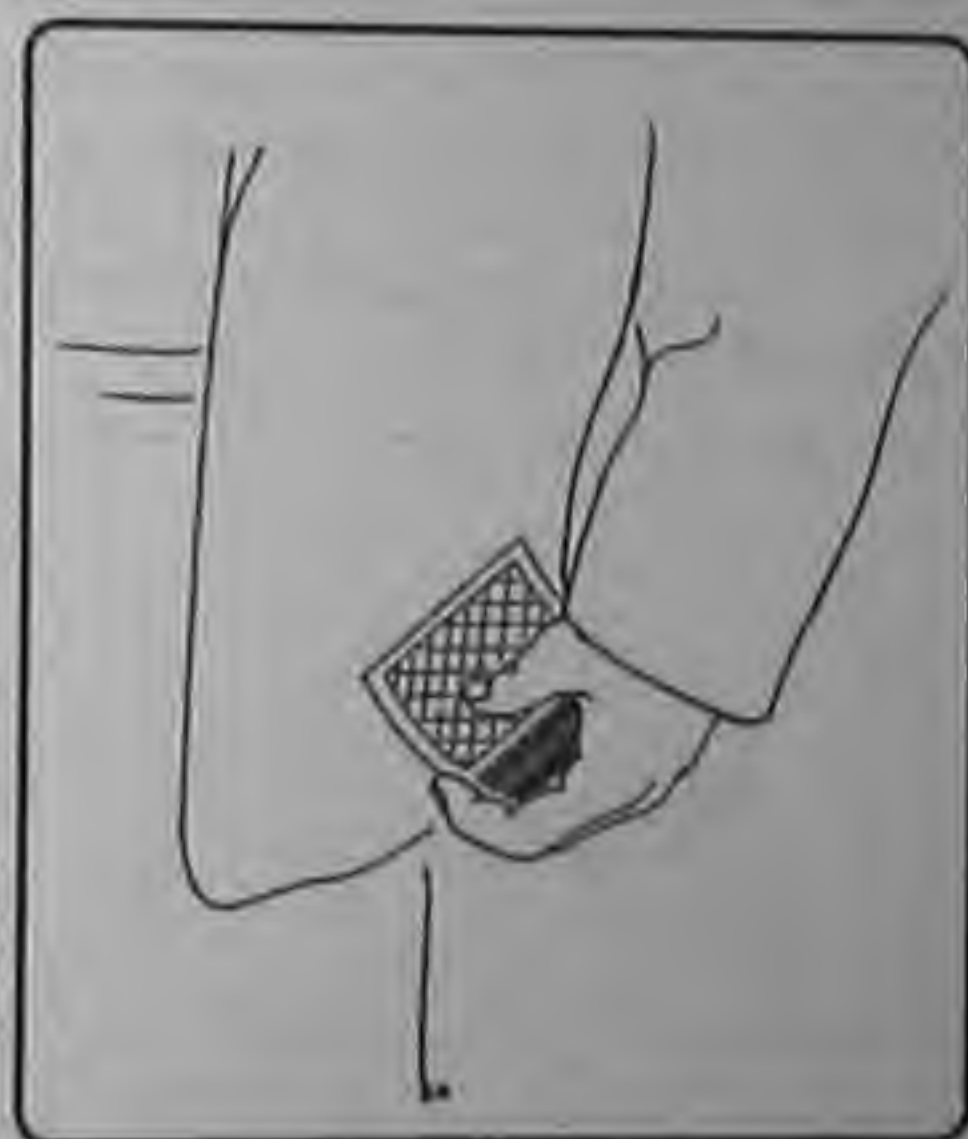
### Check Points

1. In the three reverse techniques just discussed, an overt action masks the covert reversal. The overt action must seem spontaneous and not premeditated. It should seem as if you simply wish to clarify something and use the deck to underscore this point.
2. There will be times when you encounter a routine into which the actions described above don't fit. Either adapt them, so that they seem logical, or consider a more suitable method for reversing the card.
3. A convincing subtlety: After completing either the double lift reversal or the double turnover reversal, you can spread the deck face down between your hands as you make a relevant remark. Of course, you must take care to keep the reversed card concealed.

## The Leg Reverse

This technique requires strong misdirection, but in certain situations this is the best technique available. It can be introduced when the hand holding the deck falls below the level of the tabletop during a relaxed moment. In informal performing situations this handling can be completely inconspicuous.

You wish to reverse the top card of the deck. Let's assume that you are standing, although this technique can also be used if you are seated. Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and let the hand hang naturally at your left side. Throw a boomerang card (*Volume 1*, page 175) or perform some other attention-grabbing action with your right hand. With your left thumb, simultaneously push the top card of the deck to the right. Then, using your left thigh as a helpful surface, turn this card face up onto the deck. The reversal can also be carried out with the arm slightly bent, in which case the action will take place near the hip. With some practice, this reverse can even be performed against the front of the thigh.





### Check Points

1. To avoid exposing the reversed card on top, after the reversal the deck must be placed face up on the table or the card brought to the center of the deck with an overhand shuffle. Of course, the shuffle is executed with the faces of the cards toward the audience.
2. You can also reverse multiple cards with this technique by using a multiple push-over (*Volume 1*, page 211) or by holding a break under the cards you wish to reverse.
3. This technique is an excellent substitute for the double lift in an "ambitious card" routine. As the right hand displays the ambitious card, your left hand secretly turns the top card face up on the deck. Place the right hand's card face up on the deck, tipping the top of the deck toward yourself until the card is squarely in place, covering the reversed card. You now have a double card face up on top of the deck and can proceed accordingly.

## Deck Turnover Reverse

This may be the most natural technique for secretly reversing one or more cards in the deck. Once again, an overt action is used to cover the covert one. Here the audience sees you turn the face-down deck face up and briefly spread the cards between your hands.

Let's assume that you want to reverse the bottom card secretly. Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and obtain a left little-finger break above the bottom card. You can do this using a buckle (*Volume 1*, page 212) or by riffling the bottom card off your right thumb. With your palm-up right hand, reach into the break at the inner right corner. Look at the deck as you do this.

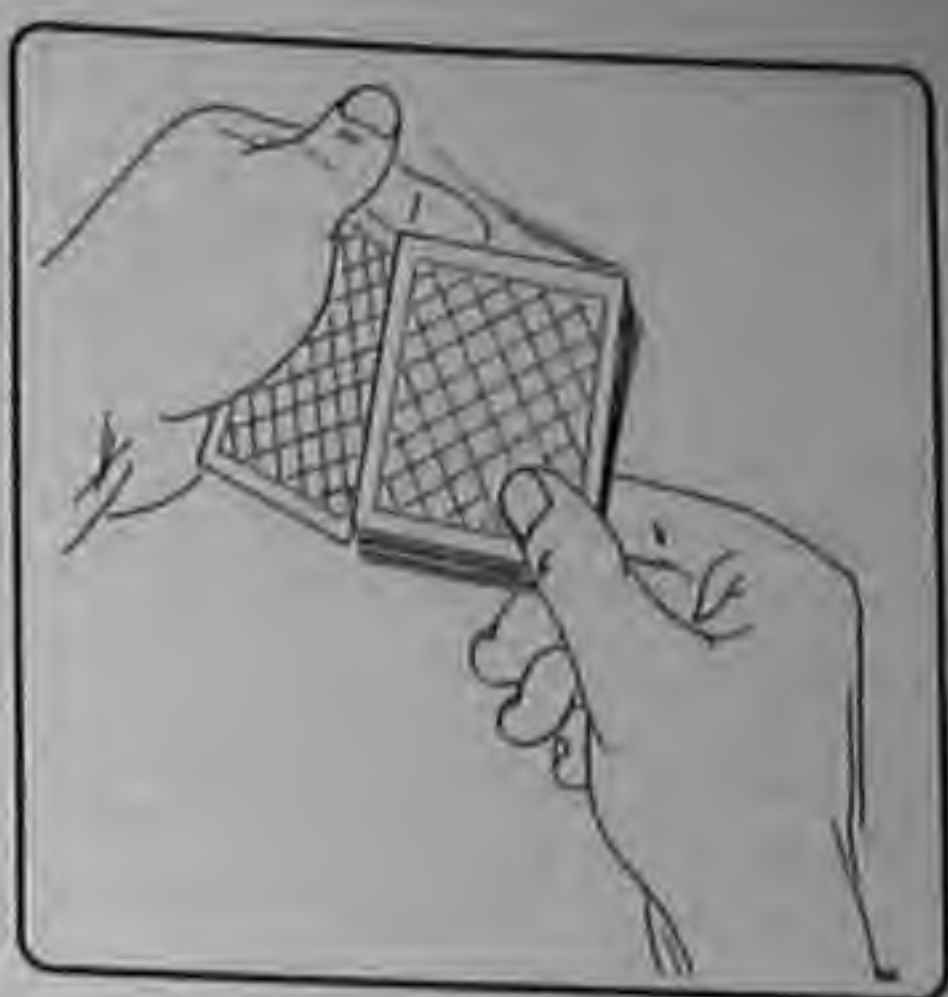


Now raise your gaze to the audience and make a relevant remark, such as "*Your card is somewhere in this shuffled deck.*" At that instant use your right hand to turn the deck, sans bottom card, face up. The lower left side of the deck will glide along the back of the bottom card, which remains in place. Tip the top of the deck slightly toward yourself as you do this, but don't angle it too much or you will expose the bottom card retained in your left hand.



Spread the deck briefly between your hands. If the reversed card needs to be in the center of the deck, break the spread in half as you make a gesture and transpose the halves of the spread as you reunite them and square the cards. When doing this you can use the same overt action to turn the deck face down that was used to turn it up.

As an additional subtlety you may wish to cull any card under the spread as you casually display the face-up deck. When squaring the deck, this culled card will ride under the reversed card, covering it. You can now turn the deck face down—and everything looks as it should.



# TRICKS WITH THE REVERSE

## The Whistle

The creator of this trick is none other than the highly influential American mentalist Theodore Annemann, who enjoyed great success with it in the 1930s.<sup>28</sup> I have made only minor changes to the handling and presentation.

### Effect

Two cards are chosen, noted and shuffled back into the deck. Each one then mysteriously and inexplicably turns face up when the performer whistles for it. This very effective, well-thought-out presentation is humorous and the method is both elegant and efficient.

### Construction, Management and Script

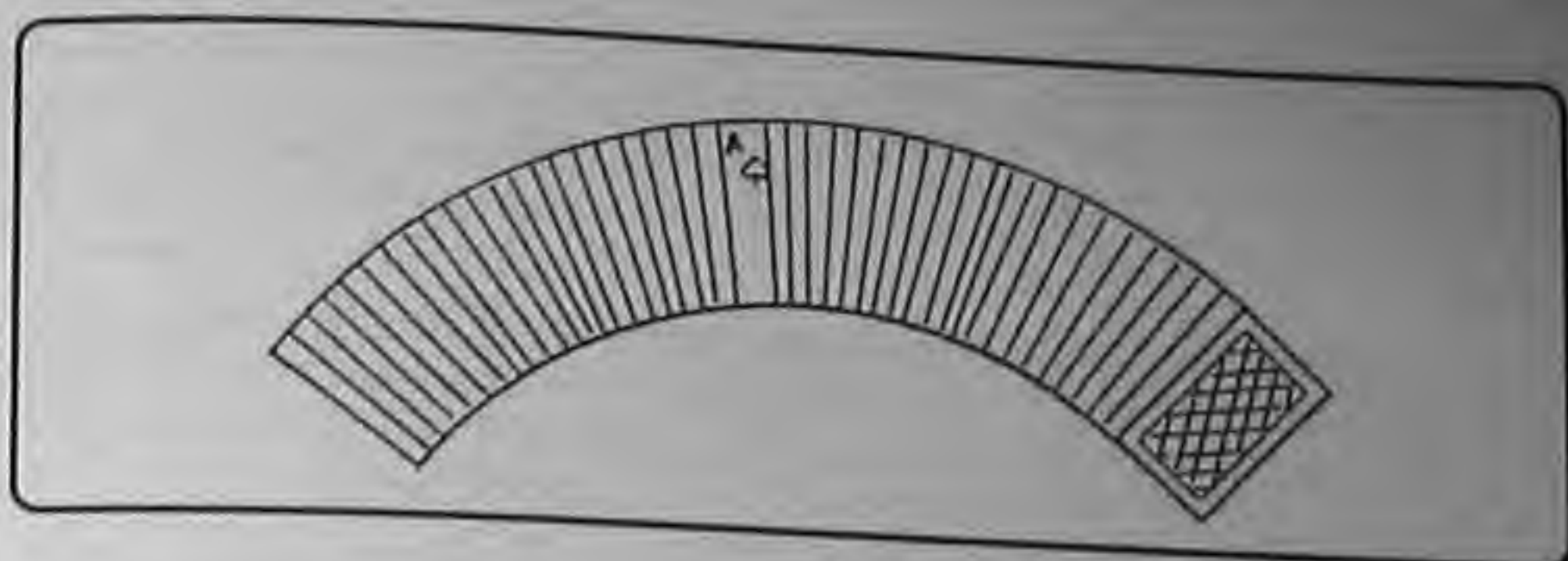
Have two spectators each choose a card. After everyone has seen them but you, have the cards returned to the deck and use an overhand shuffle to control them to positions one and three from the top. Here is one good method for doing this: First shuffle off about half the deck and pause to have the first selection returned. Injog one card over it and shuffle off the balance of the deck. Form a break above the injogged card and shuffle off the cards above this break. Pause for the return of the second selection. Then run one card, injog the next and shuffle off the rest. Again form a break over the injogged card, shuffle off to the break and throw the balance of the deck on top. These three quick shuffles have brought the first selection to the top. Under it is an indifferent card, followed by the second selection. (Alternatively, you could use two overhand shuffles or a Hindu shuffle to control the selections to the top, then perform a riffle shuffle to introduce an indifferent card between the two chosen ones. You will find that riffle shuffling a single card between the top two cards is not a difficult feat to master.)

Use the double turnover reverse (page 370) to turn the top card secretly face up under an indifferent top card.

*"I will now find your cards. But not with dexterity, as you may expect. No, I've developed a more sophisticated method for this. Each card responds to a specific series of tones. The cards are trained to respond immediately when they hear me whistle to them."* As you say this in half seriousness, cut small packets of cards from the bottom to the top of the deck to place the reversed card near the center.

Now ask the first spectator to name the card she picked. Pause as though concentrating on the answer, then whistle any short sequence of notes that amuses you. Ribbon spread the cards face down on the table—the first spectator's card appears face up in the center of the spread!





"I know. There are always skeptics who don't believe in pipe dreams. They're not entirely wrong, since most of the invisible power actually comes from the contact the spectator has with the card." As you explain this, separate the ribbon spread at the face-up card and reassemble the deck to bring the selection to the top. As you square the deck, form a left little-finger break under the top two cards. Pick up both cards as one in right-hand end grip as your left hand rotates the rest of the deck face up.



Place the right hand's double card on the face of the deck, cut the cards and turn them face down.

Place the deck in front of the second spectator, requesting that the hand that touched the card pass over the deck. *"The card will sense your power and turn itself over."* After the spectator has done so, ribbon spread the deck face down on the table—and the second selection has turned itself over!

### Final Notes

1. The most clever aspect of this routine is that you are always one step ahead of the audience. Each card is reversed before the audience has any idea where the effect is going.
2. Repeating the effect with the second selection is what makes this routine so strong. Everyone clearly sees that only one card is reversed in the spread after the first revelation. Nothing suspicious happens after that, and yet the second selection turns over as well.
3. You don't need to worry about the second selection, since the first card acts as both a key and as a cover for the secret reverse.



# Reversible Mix-up

## Effect

The spectator notes a card, which is then shuffled into the deck. At first the magician finds the wrong card, but ultimately it changes under mysterious circumstances to the selection. Though I've made few handling modifications here, this trick is essentially the creation of Frank Garcia, the successful and well-liked New York professional.<sup>29</sup>

## Construction, Management and Script

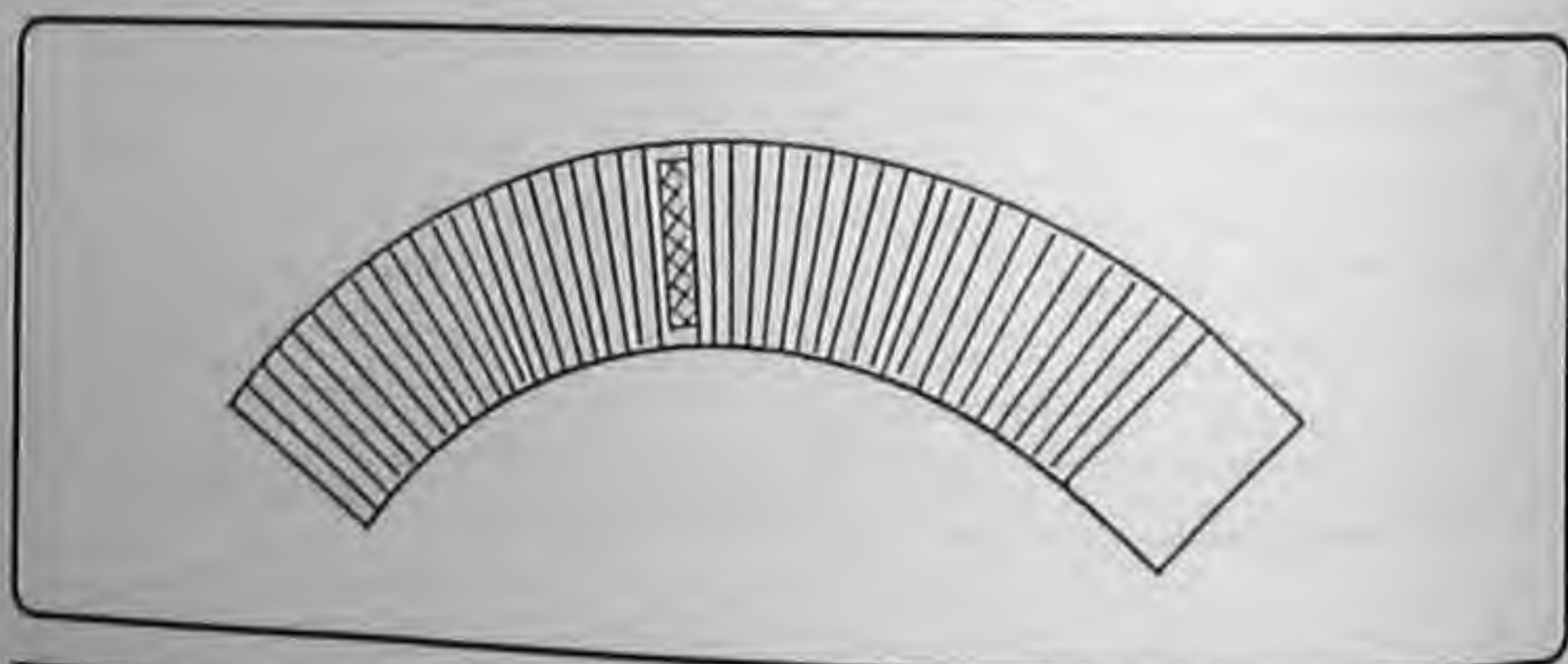
Have a spectator choose, note and return a card to the deck, which you then efficiently control to the top.

Ribbon spread the deck face down on the table. *"Please remove a card from anywhere in the spread—it will be the very card you just chose."* The spectator removes a card, but even though you have spoken with great confidence, the spectator truthfully denies that the card is his.

Gather the deck, hold it in left-hand dealing position and execute the Braue reversal to place the selection face up in the center. As you do this, say uncertainly, *"Well, then, your card must still be somewhere here in the deck."* This sentence provides the justification needed for the actions of the reverse.

Take the indifferent card the spectator removed from the spread and place it face down on the face-up deck. *"I'll cut this card into the deck."* As you say this, form a left little-finger break under the lowermost card of the deck and make the first cut of a triple-cut sequence (Volume 1, page 98), taking care of course not to cut to the reversed card near center. Then, as you cut twice more, completing the triple cut, say, *"Perhaps even deeper... and it will magically find your card."* This places one face-up card over the top, covering the face-down indifferent card. To the spectator it seems as though you've merely cut the reversed indifferent card into the center of the deck.

Ribbon spread the deck face up on the table, keeping the top few cards bunched together, so that the reversed indifferent card remains concealed in its position second from the top. A single face-down card is seen in the center of the face-up spread.





*"Is the card to its left your card? No? Then perhaps it's the card to its right? Not that either?" Pause for a moment; then act as if you've been suddenly struck by an inspiration: "Of course! Then it must be the very card after all, that you chose at the beginning!" When this proves to be the case, the spectator who chose the card won't be the only one doubting his senses!*

### *Final Note*

Of course, when asked to remove his card from the face-down spread, if the spectator happens to remove the top

card, take full credit for the miracle and stop. Do not try to repeat the effect!

## CHAPTER 25

# FALSE CUT TECHNIQUES, PART 2

*"Try to find the humanity in the magic and maybe you'll come up with something of your own. It's the humanity that gets you there, not techniques."*

Michael Moschen





In contrast to the techniques in Chapter 3 (*Volume 1*), the methods described here are employed in conjunction with a tabled riffle shuffle. This imposes the standards common to card-table practice: The hands and the deck do not leave the tabletop; that is, the deck is not taken from the table and placed in the hands as the cuts are made. This will give your presentation more authenticity, especially when you perform tricks with gambling themes.

A single complete cut of the deck is all that is actually required. The first two methods conform to this handling. But it is standard practice at gaming tables to cut the deck into smaller packets before, during and after a series of riffle shuffles. These are referred to as *running cuts*. Small packets are continuously cut off the deck until no cards remain to be cut.

Cheaters generally intermix false and true cuts as they need only maintain the order of a portion of the deck, generally on the top or bottom.<sup>30</sup> However, since magicians must often maintain a full-deck arrangement, in this chapter we will concern ourselves with cuts that do just that.

## A True, Single, Tabled Cut

In principle, there are several possible handlings for completing a single, tabled cut after one or more riffle shuffles. In this section we will examine the two methods best suited for magicians. They will serve as the starting point for our understanding of the first two false cut techniques.

**FIRST HANDLING:** Hold the deck in starting position for a riffle shuffle (*Volume 1*, page 105). With your right thumb, riffle about halfway up the inner side of the deck.



With the right hand, lift the top portion about an inch and cut it diagonally to the right. As it is separated from the deck, it traces a slight S-shape in the air and lands gently but audibly on the tabletop.



Bring your right hand back to take the lower packet and set it with a similar light slap onto the packet just cut off. Note in the illustration how the halves are visibly unsquared. Let this configuration register in the spectators' minds for a few seconds, as it emphasizes the visual impression of the cards being cut.







With your right hand, bring the still unsquared deck back to its starting position. Square it using the technique described for squaring after the shuffle in *Volume 1* (page 107). That is, the second fingers and thumbs slide simultaneously over the ends and inner side of the deck to meet at the inner corners.



**SECOND HANDLING:** Hold the deck once again in starting position for a riffle shuffle. This time use your left thumb to riffle about halfway up the inner side of the deck.



Grasp the bottom half between your right thumb and middle finger and cut it diagonally forward to the right, with the intention of placing the bottom portion on top of the left hand's half. To facilitate this, use your left middle finger to lift the outer left side of its portion slightly. As soon as the inner side of the right hand's packet has passed the outer side of the left's, tip up the inner side of the right hand's packet.

Now release the left hand's packet, so that it falls to the table visibly and with a slap.



Bring the right hand's packet back in a slight curve and *audibly* set it on top of the original top packet. As in the first handling, leave the deck unsquared for a few seconds. Then square up the cards using the technique mentioned in the first handling.

In this case the right hand has cut the bottom packet to the top. Using practically the same handling, the right hand can cut the top half to the bottom. Both courses of action have their applications.

### Check Points

1. Pay attention to the S-motion in the First Handling. It is more aesthetic than a straight path and corresponds to the natural dynamics of this action. We will use exactly the same motion when doing the corresponding false cut. The left hand's portion of the deck maintains its position parallel to the edge of the table, but the right hand's portion is rotated to a ten o'clock position as it is cut forward.
2. The cutting is performed briskly and both packets are set down with a noticeable noise. Do not confuse this with a hasty, imprecise action. The noises accentuate the salient moments of the cut and play an important role in the false cut. This holds true for both handlings.
3. When the right hand moves the unsquared packets back toward you, use the technique described for maintaining a step in *Volume 1* (page 33) to keep the portions visibly uneven until you square them.
4. In the Second Handling the entire action takes place in essentially one location. The left hand and its half remain absolutely motionless, while the right hand makes only the motions necessary to convey the bottom half to the top. If you think of the short curving action the right hand describes when completing the cut, this provides the desired economy of action.
5. In both handlings, the heel of the left palm remains on the tabletop throughout the cut.
6. The Second Handling contains numerous details that must be precisely understood and mimicked in the false cut: the ruffle, tipping the portions of the deck, the visible and audible falling of the upper half onto the table and the placement of the cut-off portion onto the deck with an audible slap.



# Single, Tabled, False Cut I

This false cut exactly simulates the series of actions described in the First Handling of the tabled true cut. It is surely the most direct method described in this chapter. While some may feel it is too simple, I assure you that it is just as deceptive as any of the more complex cuts. Thanks to its simplicity, it is at times the best method, particularly when the spectators are not watching the deck like hawks. Despite its simple nature, indeed because of it, it must still be properly understood and conscientiously rehearsed like any other technique.



Hold the deck in riffle shuffle starting position and look it. With your left thumb, form a break near center at inner side of the deck—don't riffle to do this. Raise your gaze to look at the spectators and make a remark relevant to the effect in progress. As you do this, with your right hand briskly move the bottom half diagonally forward and set it on the table with an audible slap.

It should look exactly as if you took the upper half. The actions must conform exactly to those of the true cut described previously.



Bring the right hand back to grasp the presumed bottom portion while looking at it; then place it audibly and with a similarly emphasized action on the tabled packet, leaving the halves slightly unsquared with each other.

As described previously, bring the unsquared tabled deck back to its initial position and square the cards.

## Check Points

1. When your right hand moves the bottom packet forward, your left hand should immediately press the top packet down on the tabletop.
2. A secure grip on the deck between your left middle finger and thumb prevents cards from jutting from beneath the outer edge of the left hand's top packet as the initial break is formed. Jutting cards at this point would injure the illusion of the false cut.
3. Keep in mind the S-shaped motion of the true cut, and mimic it precisely, even when moving the second packet.



# Single, Tabled, False Cut II

This false cut mimics the actions of the Second Handling of the single, tabled, true cut. If you precisely simulate the actions of the true cut, this false cut creates a perfect deception.

Hold the deck in starting position for a riffle shuffle and look at it. With your left thumb, riffle halfway up the inner side of the deck, as if preparing for a true cut. Now release the top packet from your left thumb, letting the break close. Though the break you form is immediately released, the action of creating it provides the correct appearance and proper timing for the initial action of the cut, which is apparent in the tension of the left hand and the sound of the riffle. Raise your gaze to the audience; then, with your right hand, immediately grasp the top half and slide it diagonally forward, tipping down the outer side. Simultaneously use your left middle finger to tip up the outer side of the left hand's half.



Move the right hand's half forward until its inner side clears the outer side of the left hand's half. At that very moment release the left hand's cards, so that they fall onto the tabletop as though the right hand had pulled its cards from beneath them. The right hand's motion should already have begun to reverse, with the intention of placing the cards it holds onto the packet being tabled by the left hand.



Complete the right hand's motion and audibly slap its cards onto the tabled packet. Let the halves remain unsquared for a few seconds, then square them.



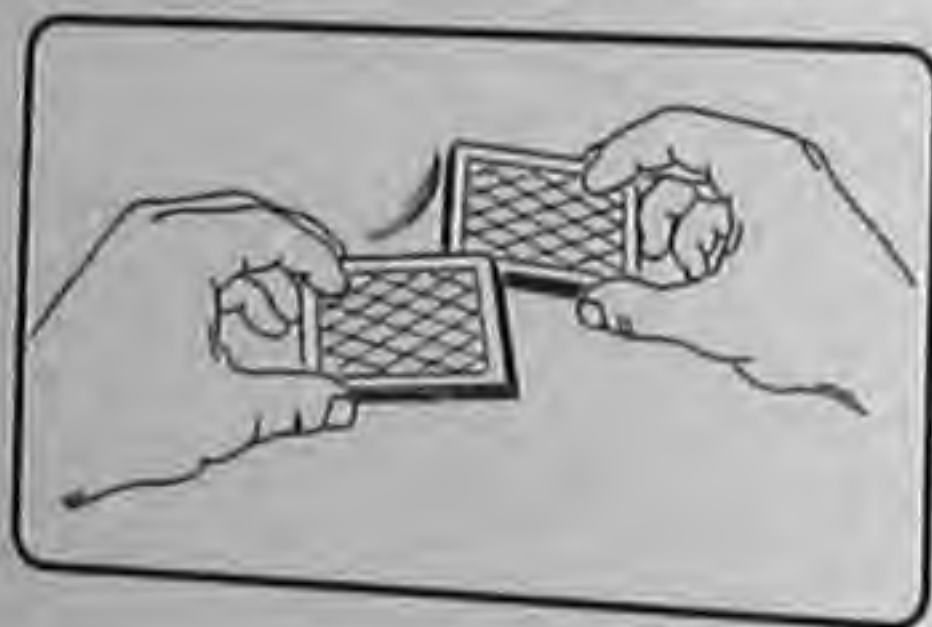


## Check Points

1. The tipping of both packets in the initial actions of the false cut precisely simulates the visual impression of the true cut.
2. Pay attention to the dynamics of the gaze, which follows the same principles in each false cut. Before cutting, you look at the deck. Just before beginning the cut you shift your gaze to the audience and keep it there. Once you have completed the false cut with an audible slap, shift your gaze back to the deck and square the packets. This provides the optimum division of attention. Properly understood and correctly rehearsed, this false cut is never suspected, let alone detected.
3. A perfect illusion relies on a combination of elements: the initial pause as your thumb riffles up the deck, the tipping of the packets, the fall of the left hand's packet to the table, the return swing of the right hand's cards and the audible replacement at the finish.
4. Keep the left index finger motionless on top of the bottom packet, lifting it only when the right hand's packet returns for the replacement.

## A True Running Cut

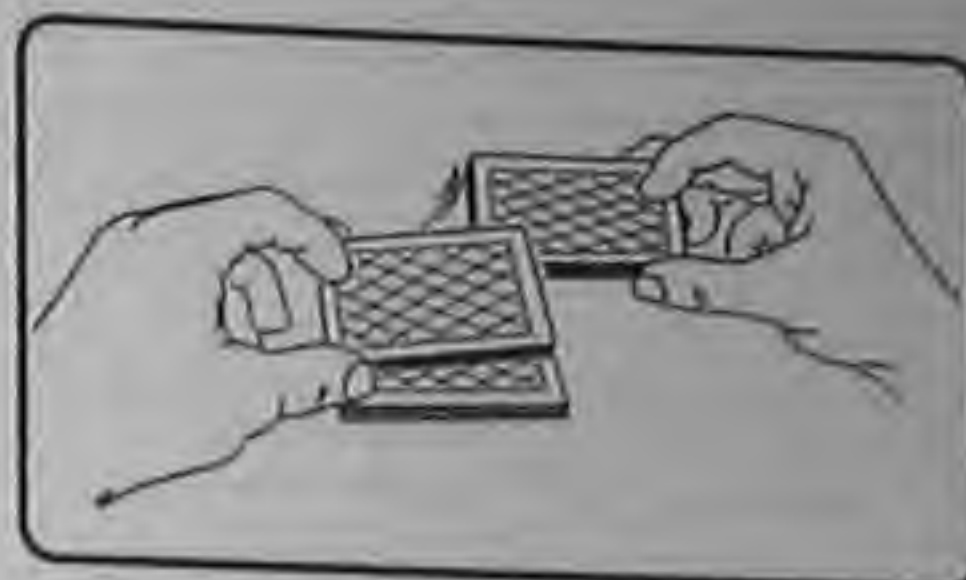
This running cut has its origins at the card table. For all practical purposes, it is basically a tabled version of an overhand or a Hindu shuffle. Combining riffle shuffles with running cuts would seem to guarantee that the deck is thoroughly mixed. Of course, you know by now that things are not what they appear to be! There are dozens of false running cuts. Here we'll discuss several of the best. But first let us examine the true running cut, which serves as our model for the false cuts.



Hold the deck in starting position for a riffle shuffle. Firmly grasp approximately ten of the top cards between your left thumb and middle finger, and with your right hand move the rest of the deck diagonally forward and to the right. When the right hand's packet has cleared the left's, let the left hand's cards fall to the table.

As soon as the left hand's cards hit the table, bring the right hand's packet back over them in a short arc.

Rather than reuniting and squaring the two packets, keep the right hand's cards about half an inch above the tabled packet. With your left thumb and middle finger, grip another packet of ten or so cards at the top of the right hand's packet and hold them firmly as the right hand moves the rest of its packet diagonally forward and to the right again. Let the left hand's cards fall onto the tabled packet as the right hand swings its packet back over the growing pile on the table. These actions are repeated until the cards in the right hand's packet are exhausted. Conclude the sequence of cuts by using both hands to square the cards in the manner previously prescribed.



### Check Points

1. All together, five or six cutting actions will be necessary to work through the entire deck. Since only a triple cut is necessary to destroy the cyclic order of a deck, this is most often the form mimicked when performing a false running cut.
2. It is common to conclude a running-cut sequence with a further single straight cut.



# Up the Ladder

This false running cut comes closest in appearance to its honest counterpart. The deck is apparently cut using five or six cutting actions, just as in the true running cut.



Hold the deck in starting position for a riffle shuffle and, with your left thumb, riffle off about ten cards from the bottom. With your right hand, cut these cards to the top, but jog them about half an inch to the left, as shown in this schematic diagram.



With your right hand, cut the large right-jogged packet to the top, keeping it jogged to the right of the smaller packet, which is allowed to fall to the table.



Continuing the right hand's action, cut about ten more cards from the bottom of the right-jogged packet to the top, jogging this new packet to the left, in alignment with the small bottom packet.



With the right hand, cut the rightjogged packet to the top, keeping it jogged to the right as the previously cut upper packet is dropped onto the tabled cards.

Repeat the cutting actions described in the previous two paragraphs until the larger rightjogged portion of the deck has been diminished to nothing. On average, this will take about eight cutting actions.

## Check Points

1. Once you've mastered this technique, small jogs no larger than the width of a white border (that is, less than a quarter of an inch) will be required. A back design without borders allows you to increase the size of the jogs without

detection. Use of such a design is desirable whenever practical.

2. This cut is done to a very brisk rhythm. To keep the cards in control, the thumb and middle finger of each hand must securely grip their packets.



## Dai Vernon's Cold-deck Cut

This comes from the "Professor", Dai Vernon, and is certainly one of the very best techniques of its kind for magicians.<sup>31</sup> The deck is initially given three running cuts, followed by a single straight cut. This makes it deceptive even for experts and it is by no means obvious in its execution.

Hold the deck in starting position for a riffle shuffle and, with the tip of your right index finger, lift the top quarter of the deck a fraction of an inch along the outer side. Using the left middle finger at the outer left corner of the deck, also raise the next quarter very slightly. This illustration and the next two show views from the front. (I should mention that Dai Vernon, when doing this cut, curled his index fingers on top of the packets, and used his right second finger to lift the top quarter, etc. Either fingering pattern works. Try both and use the one that feels best in your hands.)



Cut the bottom half, gripped between your right thumb and middle finger, and the top packet, gripped between your right thumb and index finger, diagonally forward to the right. This automatically strips out the left hand's quarter, which you let drop to the table under the left hand's control. The separation between the right hand's packets is exaggerated for clarity in the illustration. In actual practice, during the right hand's forward and return motion, the break between these packets is barely perceptible.



Without interrupting the flow of motion, bring the right hand's packets back over the tabled packet. With your left index finger and thumb, grasp the top packet of the right hand's cards and hold it back, letting it drop onto the tabled packet as your right hand moves diagonally outward again, holding only the original bottom packet.







With the same motion used previously, bring the right hand's packet back over the tabled cards and let the bottom of this packet graze the outer upper edge of the tabled packet. To do this you must tip up the right hand's packet slightly, which allows you to obtain a left thumb break between the two packets at their inner sides as they become aligned. Square the deck with a stroking action of your right hand, gliding the right middle finger along the right end and your right thumb along the inner side until they meet at the inner right corner.



Transfer the break to your right thumb and push the deck forward about ten inches. Now your left hand may square the cards if you like, using the same stroking action just performed by the right hand, but at the inner left corner.



With your right hand, cut all the cards above the break forward and to the table. Bring the hand back and grasp the balance of the deck, then move it forward and place this packet slightly misaligned on top of the previous packet. As described earlier, draw the unsquared deck back to its initial position and square it there. This completes an extremely deceptive false cut.

### Check Point

You can, if you like, perform an up-the-ladder cutting sequence with the final packet, when concluding the Vernon

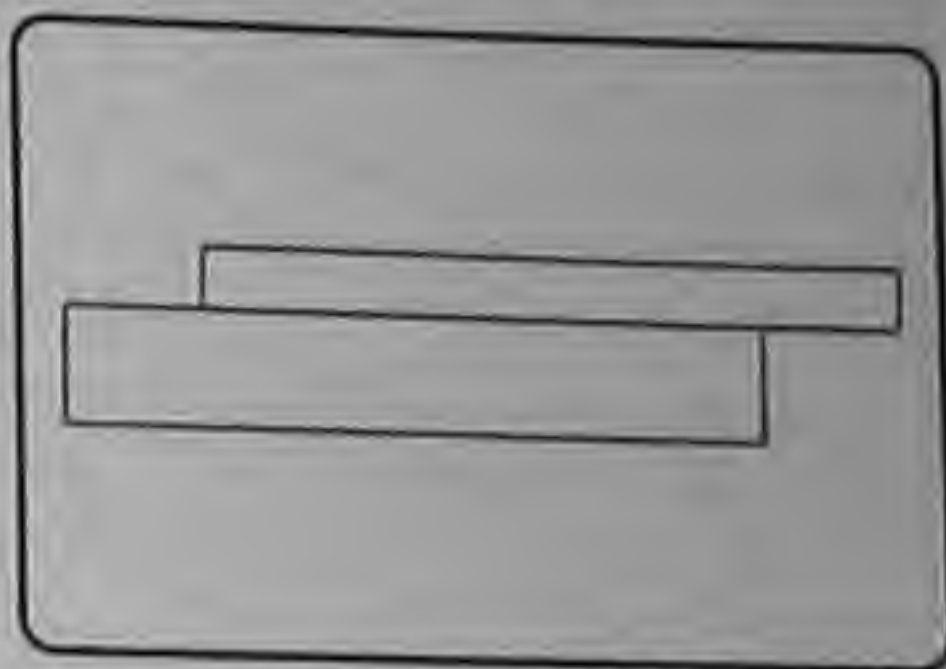
false running cut. This extends the cutting sequence in an interesting and deceptive manner.



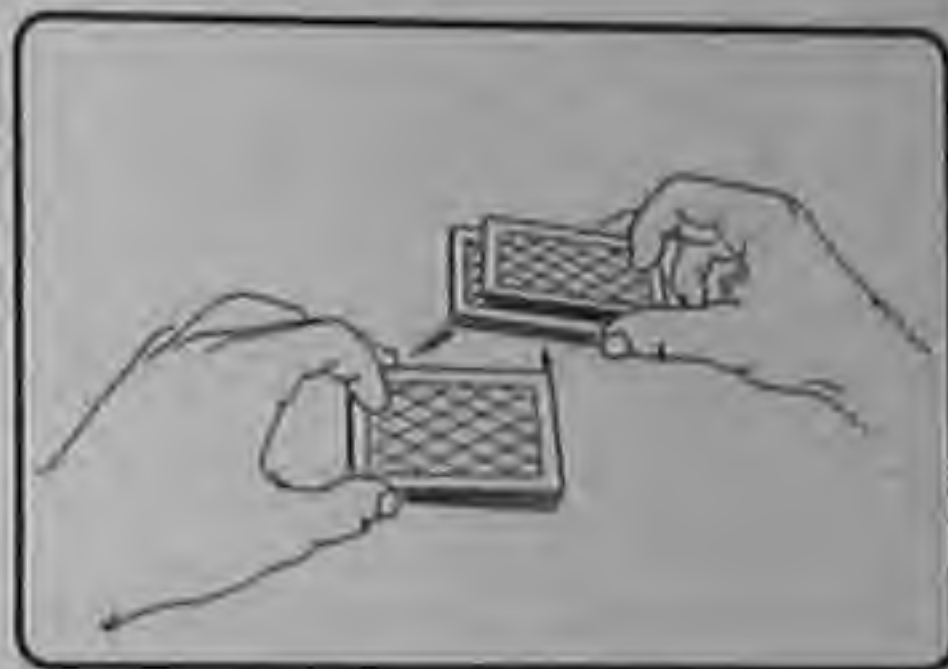
## Affas-gaffas False Cut

This false cut looks so straightforward and innocent that you will fool yourself with it time and again. Its basis is a false cut described by S. W. Erdnase.<sup>22</sup> The very deceptive variant I'm about to explain was published by the American card expert and author, Frank Garcia.<sup>23</sup>

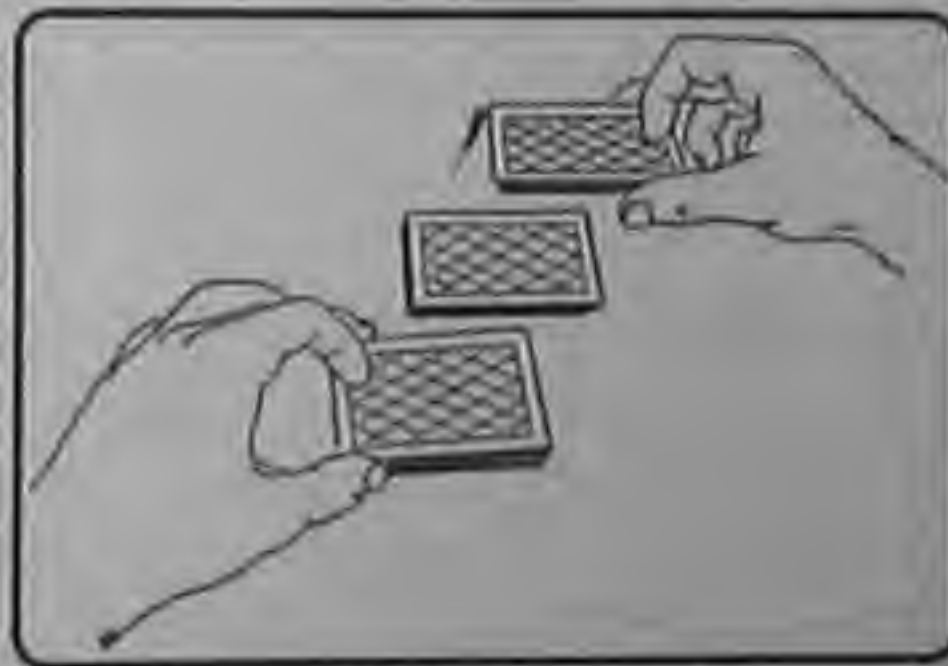
Hold the deck in starting position for a riffle shuffle and, with your left thumb, riffle off about a third of the cards from the bottom of the deck. With your right hand, cut the bottom third to the top, placing it on the deck with an audible slap and jogging it about half an inch to the right. This initial phase precedes a triple cut on the table and the two phases should be separated by a pause of several seconds. The illustration shows a schematic representation of the deck at this point.



You will now cut the deck into three parts. Hold the upper half of the leftjogged packet firmly between your left thumb and middle finger. With your right hand, cut the upper and lower thirds of the deck diagonally forward to the right. Let the left hand's packet drop to the table. The illustration shows the situation at this point. The right hand holds two packets, the upper one still jogged to the right and separated from the lower one by a break caused by the removal of the left hand's packet.



Drop the lower of the right hand's packets onto the table and move the final packet forward, setting it down as well. Since the right hand continues to move forward and right as it deposits its packets, the three sections of the deck will lie in a diagonal line.







Bring your right hand back to the innermost packet, which is still grasped by your left hand. Take this packet in your right hand and place it onto the middle packet; then place both these packets on top of the final, outermost packet. Slide the unsquared deck back to its initial position and square it.

### Check Points

1. With practice it is possible to reduce the size of the jog to the width of a white border, that is, less than a quarter of an inch.
2. Keep in mind that the timing of this sequence has two distinct parts: a single straight cut, followed by the triple cut.

## Gambler's False Triple Cut

According to the American gambling expert Darwin Ortiz, the following false cut is currently quite popular among card cheats and is frequently put into practice.<sup>34</sup>



Hold the deck in starting position for a riffle shuffle. The illustration shows the positions of those portions of the deck to be cut.



With your left thumb, riffle up the inner side of the deck and stop about two thirds from the bottom. With your right hand, cut combined Packets B and C to the top, leaving them jogged about half an inch to the left.



With your left hand, hold Packet C stationary as your right hand cuts Packets B and A forward, then brings them back on top of Packet C. Packets B and A are left staggered with B aligned with Packet C. With your right hand, strip out Packet A and cut it to the top to conclude the sequence.

# CHAPTER 26

## FLOURISHES, PART 2

*"All that glitters is not magic."*

Tony Shiels



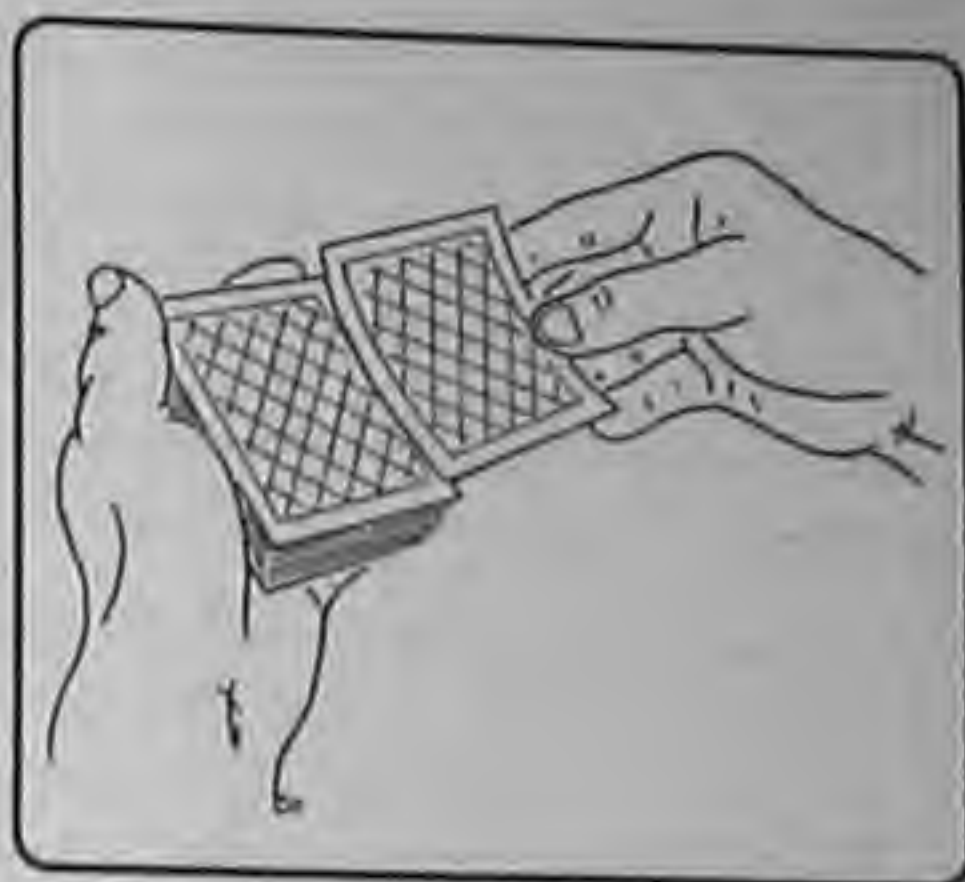


The flourishes described in this chapter demand more precision and coördination, and therefore more intensive practice than those in Chapter 12 (*Volume 1*, page 167). Many of them require a little knack that can only be gained through such practice. However, when performed smoothly and elegantly, these flourishes will make a positive impression on any audience.

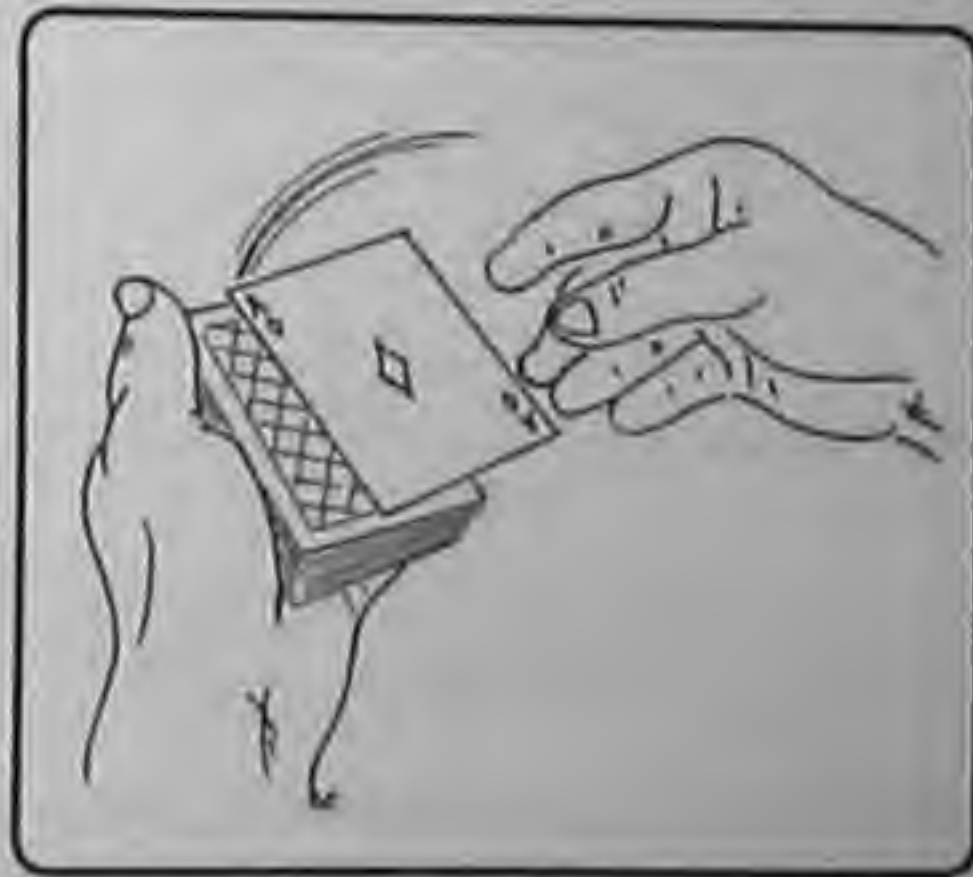
## Turning Over the Top Card IV

Both hands are used in this method, in which the card visibly flips over. Because this turn-over seems almost acrobatic, it is perfect for those tricks in which an acrobatic presentation is used, like "The Acrobat Family" (*Volume 1*, page 123).

While holding the deck in left-hand dealing position, use your left thumb to push the top card to the right. With your palm-up right hand, grasp the right side of the card, thumb above, fingers beneath. Make sure that the right thumb is positioned over the middle finger. Use this thumb to press down on the back of the card, and counter this downward pressure with an upward one from your right index and ring fingers.



Next slide your right thumb to the right until it slips smartly off the right edge of the card. When done properly, the card will flip over acrobatically to the left with an audible *click*, and land face up on the deck in your left hand.





## Turning Over the Top Card V

This is a one-handed method that leaves an artistic impression when executed properly and with confidence. This technique can also be used for a double turnover.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and, with your left thumb, push the top card forward about half an inch beyond the outer end of the deck. Curl in the outer phalanx of your index finger and place it under the outer end of the top card, contacting its face with the fingernail. Move your thumb to the left edge of the card, near the outer corner, and the outer phalanx of your middle finger to the right edge, again near the corner.



Press upward with your index finger, causing the card to bow up, your thumb and middle finger holding down their respective sides of the card. If you now move your thumb slightly to the left, the card will snap face up, making a half turn in the air, and land on the outstretched right hand.

*Variation:* By changing the index finger's pressure point somewhat, the card can be caught upon the deck itself.

## Turning Over the Top Card VI

This turnover is also a one-handed maneuver, which has an elegant look. It, like the previous turnover, can be the basis for a very deceptive double lift. Indeed, that was Carmen D'Amico's original intention when he invented it.<sup>36</sup> The description given below teaches you how to turn over a single card. The same actions are used to execute a double lift, the only difference being that you first let two cards riffle off your thumb; then continue exactly as described for the display of a single card. Executing a deceptive double lift with this technique, however, will take considerably more practice to perfect than the turnover of a single card.

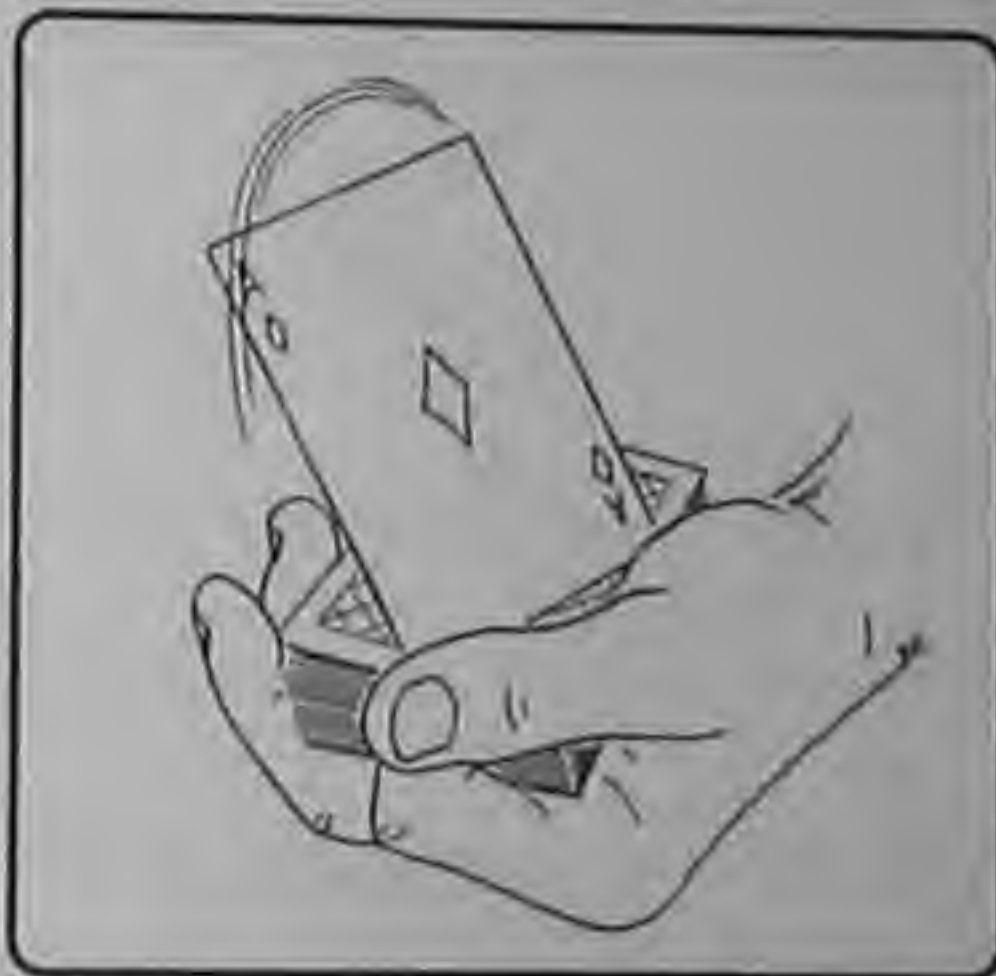
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and press your thumb down on the left side, riffling off the top card. With your left thumb, lift this card about half an inch, while holding it in place with counterpressure from the outer phalanx of your index finger, which extends above the outer top edge of the deck. The illustrations for this turnover show it as seen from the front.



Push your thumb forward and up, while using the outer phalanx of the index finger as pivot point about which the card should begin to rotate.



If you push further forward with your thumb, you will cause the card to snap face up. As soon as the card has flipped face up it will be gripped automatically by its outer left corner between your thumb and index finger. Your right hand now joins the action for the first time. It grasps the card at its upper sides, between the thumb and middle finger with the tip of the forefinger contacting the face of the card. With this hand you then snap the card face down and replace it on the deck.





# Springing the Cards

Since it has been featured by numerous performers and seen in mainstream movies, to the public this is one of the most familiar card flourishes expected of a magician. You can forget the fantasy of the cards flying horizontally for three feet from hand to hand. That is an overly optimistic exaggeration. What follows is a realistic description.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and grasp it as well in right-hand covered end-grip (*Volume 1*, page 17). However, do not curl your right index finger on top of the deck, but let it lie beside the right middle finger at the outer end. Moderately buckle the cards: about as much as is shown in the illustration. You can use your left index finger to facilitate this by pressing it against the face of the deck.



Raise your right hand with the cards, moving it to the right as well, while you increase pressure between the right thumb and fingers. The cards will automatically begin to slip away from the fingers at the outer end and spring into the left hand. There they are caught in the position shown. Note that the open and spread left fingers catch and contain the cards as they land, the index finger at the outer end, the other fingers at the right and the thumb at the left. The cards should be caught loosely but are prevented from slipping out of the hand. When almost all the cards have been sprung, bring the right hand back to the left and square the cards.



### Check Points

1. The springing begins just before your right hand leaves the left. The right hand moves smoothly and swiftly up, then back down, as if you were playing an accordion. The springing takes place during this up and back motion.
2. Once you have mastered the technique, you can separate your hands fifteen or more inches apart.
3. First practice releasing the cards smoothly from the right hand. This can be practiced while standing in front of a couch and springing the cards against its back. Next practice catching the cards in the left hand. In the beginning you can hold your left hand close to your body, using your stomach to stop the cards from slipping inward and out of the left hand. Once you've acquired the knack, the flourish should be performed with both hands away from the body. Such inward slippage can be avoided by releasing the cards only off the fingertips, not the thumb, and by tilting the left hand's cards downward slightly at the front.
4. If you use good quality cards you won't need to worry about bending them too severely. The brief but strong buckling of the cards is critical to the success of the flourish.
5. The right hand's motion is normally a diagonal one, upward to the right. You can also try to spring the cards vertically, but this is somewhat more difficult. It is easiest to keep the left hand stationary, but for aesthetic reasons, some performers prefer to move both hands apart and back together. Experiment.

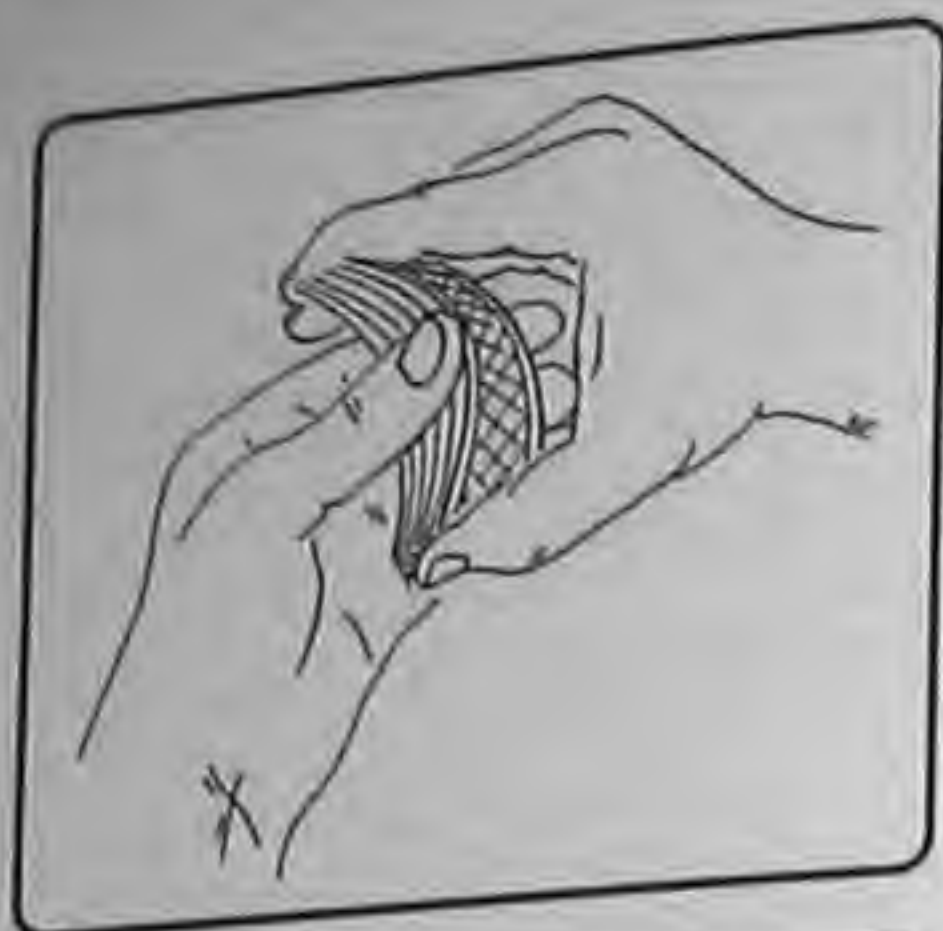
## The Cascade

In this pretty flourish, the cards seem to fall from the right hand down into the left in an unbroken stream, like a cascade or waterfall.

Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position while also grasping it in right-hand covered end-grip. The right index finger should rest at the outer end next to the middle finger, as explained above for the springing of the cards. Move the deck to a vertical position and buckle the cards briefly but sharply. Pressing your left index finger against the face of the cards aids this.







Immediately relax this pressure. As a result of this flexing of the deck, tiny gaps are introduced between almost all of the cards, and the left thumb retains them. Both hands are still in contact with the deck at this point.



Move your right hand ten to twelve inches up with the deck, while further relaxing the pressure between your thumb and fingers. This causes the cards to fall smoothly from the face of the deck, one after another, into your left hand. Before the last card falls, bring your right hand back down to the left hand, delivering the final card or two, then square the deck.

### Check Points

1. Buckling the cards and beginning the cascade are virtually a single action. In the instant you relax pressure on the buckled cards, you should begin the upward motion of the right hand.
2. The cascade begins and ends in the left hand, similar to the "accordion action" used in springing the cards. The cards start in the left hand, are raised and are

then returned to the left hand. If you properly synchronize the right hand's upward motion with the release of the individual cards, you can raise this hand sixteen inches or more above the left hand. However, even an eight-inch cascade looks good. Keep in mind that a short, smooth cascade is superior to a long one with gaps.



# The Swivelleroo Cut

This pretty elaboration on Nate Leipzig's swivel cut was invented around 1956 by the clever Irish semi-professional Hubert Lambert.<sup>16</sup> The handling taught here of Mr. Lambert's cut adds a few more æsthetic embellishments.

Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. Then, as you take it into right-hand end grip, obtain a right thumb break under the top third of the deck. Move the left hand inward and palm down, and place the tip of your left index finger against the inner left corner of the packet above the break.



Now perform a swivel cut (*Volume 1*, page 173), using your left index finger to pivot the top third of the deck forward a hundred-and-eighty degrees clockwise, until you can catch it on your now palm-up left hand. Your right middle finger serves as a pivot post for the rotating packet. With your right index finger, immediately lift about half the cards remaining in your right hand, exactly as if preparing for a swing cut (*Volume 1*, page 27). For clarity, the illustration shows this action from the front.



With the heel of your left thumb, contact the outer left corner of the packet raised by the right index finger at the approximate position shown in the illustration. Now move your right hand forward, maintaining pressure on the upper packet between your right thumb at the inner end and the heel of your left thumb at the outer left corner. The forward motion of your right hand causes the upper packet to pivot counterclockwise, the right thumb and heel of the left thumb serving as moving pivot points. When this packet swings over the first in your left hand, let it fall onto the left hand's packet, which now rests in left-hand dealing position.







Without interrupting the right hand's action, move its remaining packet slightly farther forward, so that you can press its inner end against the back of the outer phalanx of the left index finger. With this finger at one end and the right middle finger at the other, pivot the packet back clockwise a hundred-eighty degrees until it falls onto the rest of the deck. Conclude the cut by squaring the cards.

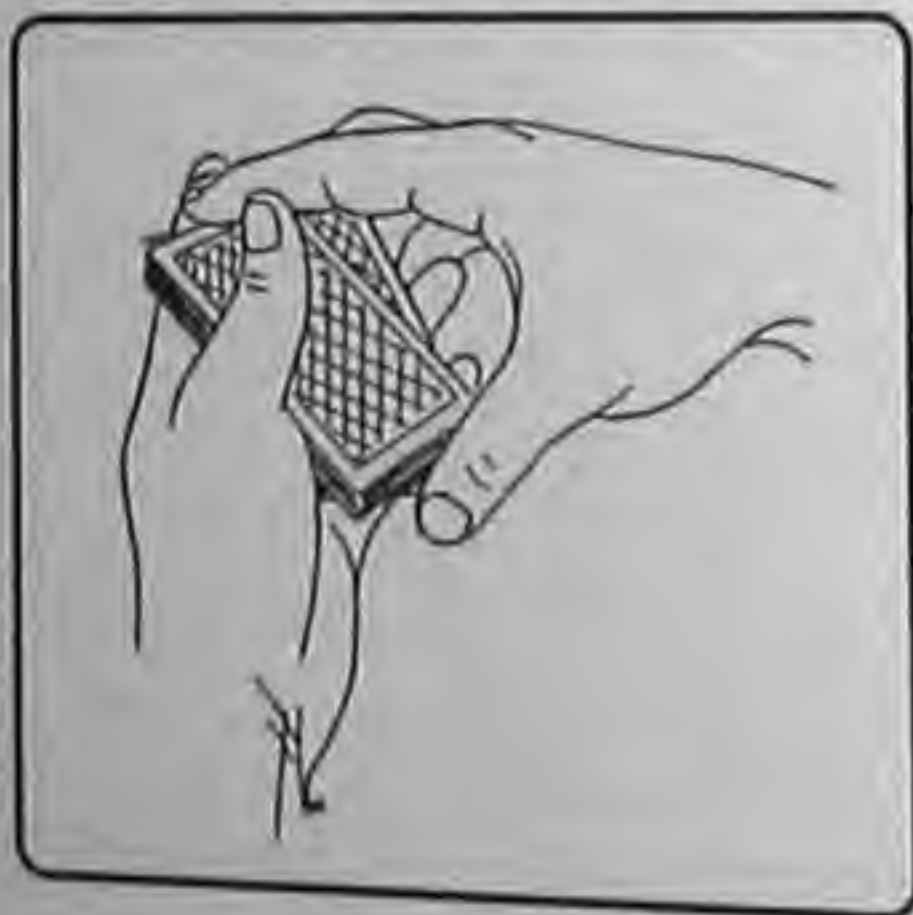
### *Check Point*

In the beginning you will have trouble cutting the second packet. Because the axis on the heel of the left thumb shifts as the packet rotates, a feeling of instability and uncertainty can result—as

though the packet were not constantly under your control. In principle, it is a question of the pressure you exert on the packet. You must develop a feel for this through practice. Don't give up too soon.

## *The Flip-flap Cut*

This flourish cut not only looks unbelievably dexterous, it also allows you to maintain the entire order of the deck! It is actually a false cut. In my opinion, it is a rare and incredibly beautiful cut: it not only looks very impressive, but is also beautifully conceived and has a wonderful rhythm.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and use your right index finger to swing cut (*Volume 1*, page 27) the top third into your left hand.

Curl your left index finger underneath the packet just cut off, then extend the fingers, turning the cards sidewise and face up until they rest on the middle, ring and little fingers. Pressure from the index finger on the face keeps the cards from falling. For the sake of clarity, this illustration and the following three give audience views.



Grip this packet between your right ring finger and thumb, under the deck but separated from it. Simultaneously swing cut about half the right hand's remaining face-down cards to the left. Grip these cards in the fork of your left thumb and move them slightly to the left.



Once again, curl your left index finger under the packet just cut off and flip it sidewise and face up to the right. Immediately grasp the right hand's remaining face-down third in the fork of the left thumb.



Now move your left hand with both its packets slightly to the left. Close the extended left fingers to flip the face-up packet face down onto the other left-hand packet. Simultaneous with this action, place your right little finger on the top of the right hand's still face-up packet, near the right side. Press down on the right side with this finger as you pull up on the left side with the right index finger, pivoting the packet face down on the axis formed by the right thumb and middle finger. Place this packet onto the rest of the deck and square the cards at the fingertips.





### Check Point

It is crucial that all phases of this cut—broken into individual steps for teaching purposes—blend smoothly together.

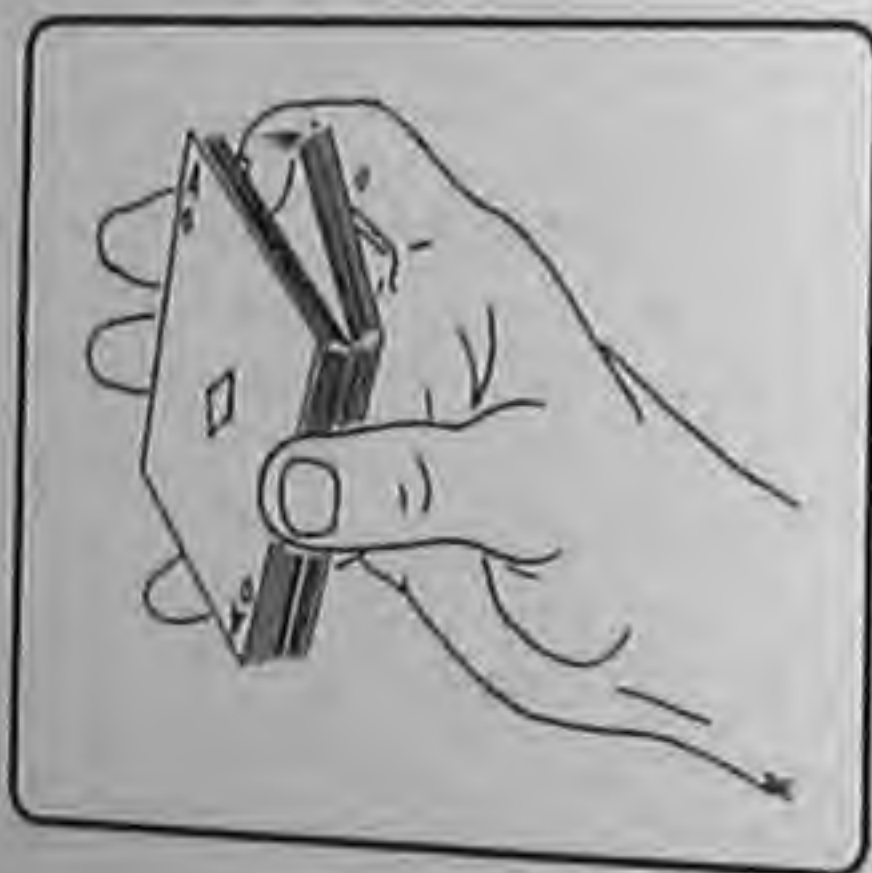
Only this flow of motion will allow you to achieve the elegance that gives the whole sequence its aesthetic style.

## One-handed Riffle Shuffle

This shuffle, invented by British variety professional Howard de Courcy,<sup>37</sup> is certainly among the most elegantly skillful of all flourishes for the close-up magician. It is as difficult to master as it looks—something for those who enjoy a challenge!

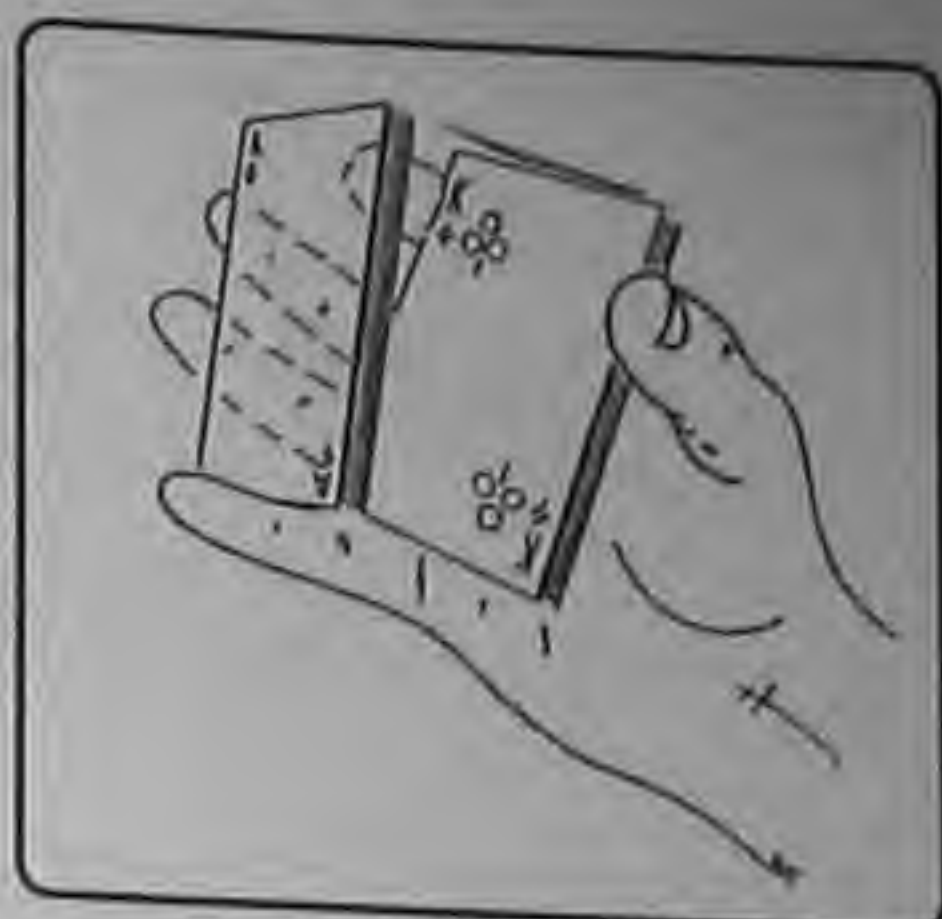


Place the deck into your right hand as shown. Hold it vertically, with the index, middle and ring fingers at the left side and the thumb at the right. Note the position of the little finger at the lower end of the deck, which prevents the cards from falling.

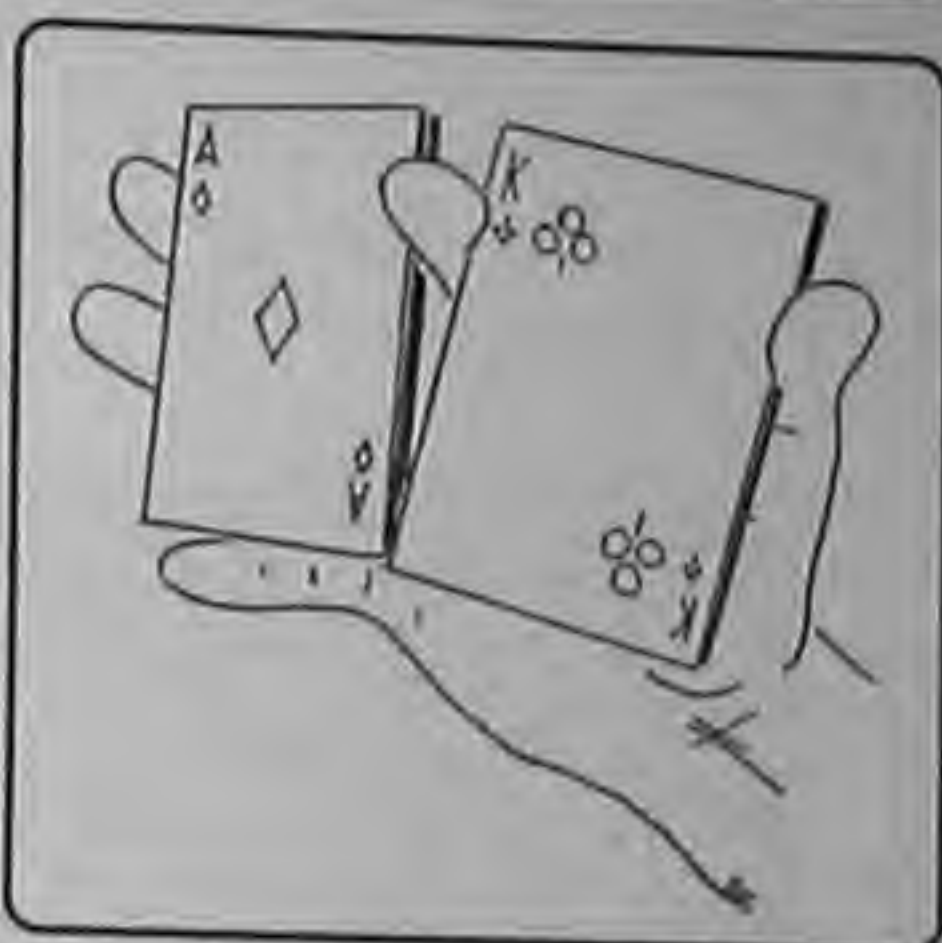


Using the pad of your index finger, divide the deck approximately in half at the left side by pulling half the cards somewhat inward, toward the palm. Bend the outer phalanx of the index finger, so that its nail lightly contacts the back of the outer packet.

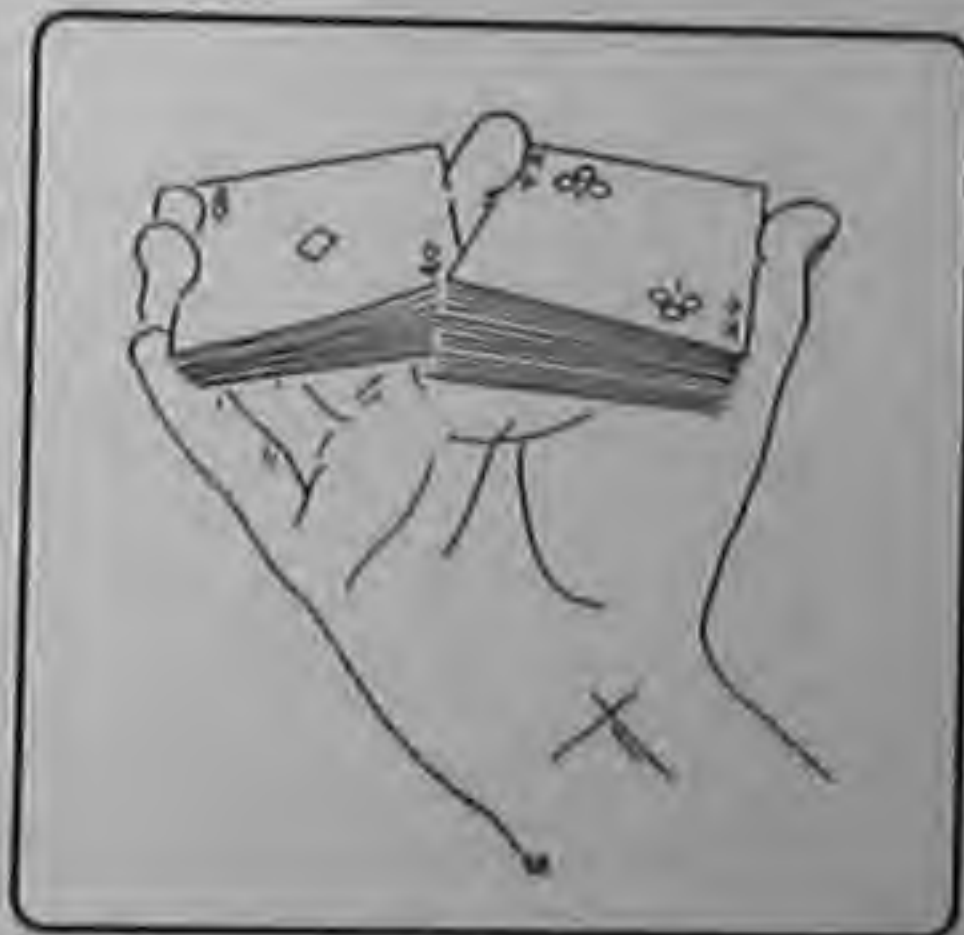
Now cut the deck into two packets by extending the middle, ring and little fingers. The outer packet should slide to the right across the nail of the index finger. The deck is still held in an almost vertical position.



Keep moving the cut-off packet leftward until its right side slides over the tip and along the back of the outer phalanx of the right index finger. At this point the packet is parallel and adjacent to the other packet. In this position it is held against the index finger by pressure from the middle, ring and little fingers.



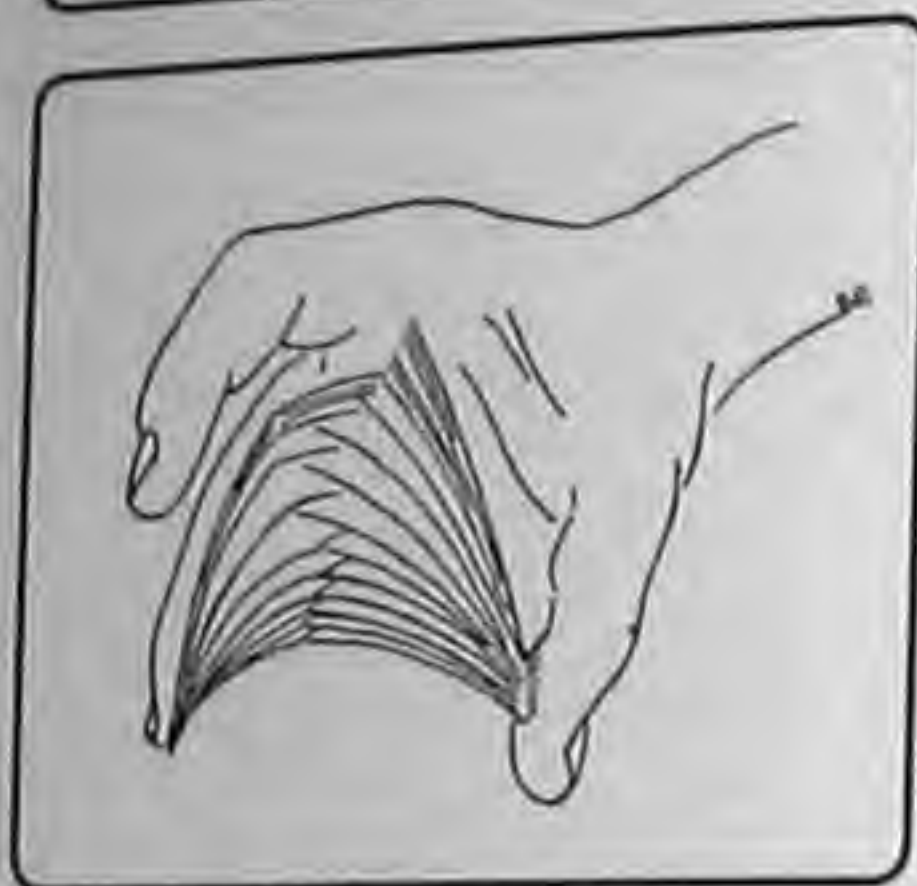
Now turn the hand palm up, bringing the packets to a horizontal position for the shuffle. Move the little finger from the end of the left-hand packet to its left side near the inner corner. Then press the touching corners of the packets gently together. The thumb and index finger provide the pressure while the other fingers serve to brace the packets. Through gently increasing and relaxing the pressure, the corners of the packets are coaxed into interweaving from bottom to top.







Once all the cards are woven, push the interlaced corners into each other for roughly an inch. Next, curl the outer phalanx of the index finger, which now rests in the fork of the V formed by the packets, in against the face of the cards. Exerting downward pressure from this finger will cause the cards to bow. The thumb on one side and the middle, ring and little fingers on the other provide mild upward counterpressure.



Turn your hand palm down, so that the packets face the floor. Then bow the cards more acutely and remove your index finger. The cards will shuffle together in a cascade. Conclude the flourish by placing the deck into left-hand dealing position and square the cards completely.

If you are prone to understatement, you might say something like *"Here is how a lazy magician shuffles cards. He places one hand in his pocket and shuffles with the other hand."*

## CHAPTER 27

### THEORY

*"To know a thing by its parts is science, to feel it as a whole is art."*

Lewis Mumford





# Some Thoughts on Theoretical Subjects

*"Art being a thing of the mind, it follows that any scientific study of art will be psychology. It may be other things as well, but psychology it will always be."*

Max J. Friedländer

Science is the foundation of all art. Science casts the foundations of art in theoretical form, discovering, defining and organizing them in a hierarchical system. This is the goal of the theoretical sections that follow. To render transparent the rules underlying a successful performance of magic, I have broken the theoretical structure down to its constituent elements, like those of timing, misdirection, etc. Although they will be treated separately, they function like precisely interlocking clockwork gears to create the effect of magic. Therefore, you might find a discussion of naturalness in the section on handling, though it would fit just as well in the sections on misdirection or presentation. If you really desire a good overview, read all of the sections, preferably twice, to grasp their interconnections.

At the end of each section is a list of recommended reading that I consider important. I have chosen to place the titles there, rather than at the end of the volume, where generally they merely bolster the author's ego and are glanced at only by academically inclined readers. I have also not followed the standard practice of listing every book that may have inspired this or that thought. This, I grant, is not the most scholarly approach, and some will feel it unfair to certain authors, but it is really to the reader's advantage. Of the hundreds of books on all branches of magic that I have read, I wanted to list only those that I consider truly outstanding and that I felt you would find the most useful to read. I enjoyed reading the other ninety-five percent, but I did not want to burden you with them.

To transcend the boundaries of pure research and achieve true art, several intangible elements are necessary, such as talent, intuition and inspiration. Leonardo da Vinci is a brilliant example of the harmonic union of science and art. However, only you can determine where knowledge ends and art begins.

You need not be striving toward a career in magic to apply the thoughts in the following sections. Quality is not the exclusive domain of the professional. When Picasso said, *"A craftsman makes what he can sell, while an artist sells what he makes,"* he precisely defined the distinction between the variety artiste and the creative artist.

When Robert-Houdin said, *"A fundamental understanding of the human psyche is the essential key to successful magic,"* he meant that the true artist must be able to understand the impact of both the art and the artist. Magic performed with virtuosity can transcend the boundaries of the performing arts and appeal to the most refined artistic sensibilities. I hope that the information in the following sections will help you in formulating and reaching such a goal.



# Presentation

Everyone will tell you that presentation is the most important element of magic. But presentation seems to mean something different to each author, so let me first define the word as I use it.

Presentation comprises all theories, strategies and techniques that share the goal of making the performance of a trick achieve a meaningful impact on its spectators. It is, therefore, the portion of a trick that most directly affects the spectators' perceptions and experience.

If we wish to imbue our tricks with an effective and memorable presentation, we must understand how spectators perceive and experience them, and how we can influence that perception and experience.

This first section defines those elements, so that you can present the tricks in this course more efficiently and with greater certainty, which is to say — more professionally.

## The Role of Presentation

### Meaning

Presentation gives your performance meaning. Why do you do what you do, and what does it mean to those who witness it? What you do must appeal to spectators or they won't pay attention to you, beyond the limits of politeness. But then you will have failed to fascinate. If you place a known card in the center of the deck, then show that it is on top, the incident is certainly amazing. If the execution is technically flawless and elegant, it can even contain an aesthetic quality. But isn't it possible to go further still? If, for example, you have the card signed by a spectator and you explain that this invests the card with aspects of the spectator's personality, then you have opened a door to a new realm, for you have given the trick significance. Now the actions of the card can be explained by the traits of the spectator: *"It's an ambitious card—it always wants to rise to the highest position."* Show the card on top, then replace it in the center of the deck. *"But sometimes it's an unpredictable joker, and goes to the top—the top of the bottom, of course."* Show the card on the bottom of the deck.

You should make a list of those things and situations that interest people: conflict, love, money, luck, other people, paranormal phenomena, etc. Every item on this list provides you with the basis for a presentation that will make each of your tricks more interesting and more expressive, and will therefore create a greater impact on the spectators' reality.

### Magical Atmosphere

When you have succeeded in attracting and maintaining the spectators' attention through the use of meaningful presentation, go a step further: Generate what Arturo de Ascanio calls "magical atmosphere". When everything is perfect: the technique, handling, management, timing and all the presentational nuances we are about to discuss, your



audience will experience a sense of wonder, as though witnessing a miracle. It is the sensation of boundless astonishment that makes us feel both childlike and reverent. At this point spectators stop searching for explanations to your tricks; they simply believe you and give themselves over to the experience. This is the ultimate goal of presentation in particular and of magic in general.

### *Entertainment*

Many magic books and magazines give a strong impression that the highest, indeed the only real goal of magic is to "entertain" an audience. Here "entertain" is used as a synonym for "amuse", and many authors assume that entertainment consists merely of amusing one's spectators, of making them laugh—and thus the art of magic is trivialized and degraded to the level of a craft, a circus variety act. The spectators' entertainment in this sense of the word is but one aspect of a magical performance.

A well-constructed and competently executed card trick can have far greater meaning for the most refined sensibility in your audience. An intelligent script, æsthetic movements and a dramatic construction can fascinate and entertain without eliciting a single chuckle. When a torn card is slowly and visibly restored, an audience senses a symbolic affinity with the powerful images of immortality that reside in the subconscious. When a card that was just there, suddenly vanishes without a trace, we sense the transience and mortality of the physical. Thus each category of effect symbolizes the spiritual, intellectual and physical reality of humanity, whose archetypes transcend time and culture to define our species. The performer of magic can communicate this and much more to his audience. As Goethe expressed it, "*Art communicates the inexpressible.*" If the function of entertainment is understood in this broader sense, I would passionately argue that indeed the entertainment of an audience must be held as one of the highest goals in the performance of magic.

### *The Role of the Performer*

Sociologists tell us that we play different roles at different times in our lives. Psychologists speak of the self-image, which determines our manner of expression. Each branch of the social sciences has its own answer to the question, Who am I? Here we pursue a broader question: How can I most effectively communicate who I am to my fellow humans? In this section we shall break down the answer to this question into its constituent elements, which are the true basis for professional presentation.

#### *Why Perform Magic?*

Before you ever begin to perform magic, you should honestly ask yourself why you even want to. The self-knowledge this provides will define your relationship to magic and to your audiences. And it will determine the form of your presentation in general and of your presentational style in particular. After this you must determine what demands you place on yourself as a magician and how far you want to go in the art. Every reason to perform magic has its justification. The worst reason is the desire to display your superiority to your fellow humans.

#### *Personality*

You'll find that the following rule holds for every presentation: If your audiences like you, they will like what you do. Interestingly, this is a rule that applies to all aspects of your life; and because of this, it becomes a fundamental rule that underlies your success in magic.



What is fundamental here is your relationship with your audience. Everything else builds on this foundation. If you do not come across as likable, you can be the world's best card technician and yet fail to enthrall your audience. You may gain their respect for your expertise and proficiency, but they won't care for you. On the other hand, you can be a performer of average technical ability and absolutely enchant the public in an unforgettable manner—if they like you. Surely we have all seen many examples of this. Under the heading of "Good Relationships" (page 464) I discuss some important ideas concerning this. Please read it.

There is only one way to improve your personality: By working on yourself. And what could be more fascinating than to spend time on the most important person in the entire world—you? Personality is the result of each of us being unique. Make a list of all the traits that you believe make up an individual's personality; for example, voice, vocabulary, manner of speaking, dress, gestures, gait, posture, loyalty, trustworthiness, and so on. Analyze how each of these traits would apply to the ideal you have for yourself. Then formulate a plan to work on realizing those ideals.

To change yourself you must go beyond thinking and take action. You will find food for thought in books, articles, classes, even life itself; but only you can turn those thoughts into action.

### *Image*

By image I mean your public representation of yourself, what spectators perceive to be your personality. Your real self is one thing, but your persona as your spectators perceive it can be quite another. Some textbooks recommend that you play the part of someone that the audience will like. That may work in the theater, but it will fail in a live, interactive presentation. If you play anyone other than yourself in that context, it will not be convincing. The father of modern magic, Robert-Houdin, issued the often misunderstood dictum that a magician is an actor playing the role of a magician. His meaning was amplified a century later by Dai Vernon, who gave us this highest maxim: "*Be yourself.*" A synthesis of these two thoughts yields the following: Use modern techniques of rhetoric, pantomime, communication, psychology, etc. not to portray a stereotypical magician, but to present *yourself* as a magician.

It is beyond the scope of this section to offer a course on personality development. We can, however, discuss several important areas where theatrical techniques are useful.

### *Voice*

Here we are not concerned with a stage voice, the rules for which you may find in textbooks on the topic or by attending specialized classes. I would recommend private instruction from a professional voice-coach. There are rules, though, that hold for performances in smaller and less formal venues. Speak in a loud, clear voice. A tried and tested rule of the theater says that you should always imagine your grandmother, who is hard of hearing, sitting among those farthest from you. Don't exaggerate, but speak loudly enough for her to hear you. Speak smoothly, but enunciate every word. Words ending in consonants are often swallowed or half-sounded and, therefore, are not properly heard. The clarity of your pronunciation, how you articulate each word, and your volume are not mere rhetorical necessities, but expressions of your personality. Clear pronunciation lends credibility and makes a stronger impression on the perceptions and memories of your audiences.



Volume and pronunciation act in conjunction with the tone and rhythm of your speech. There is only one rule governing these: Tone and rhythm must be varied. Naturally this will be determined by the structure of your presentation. Some unimportant phases will be hurried, important ones will be delivered very slowly, perhaps with corresponding pauses; sometimes you will speak softly and at other times loudly.

Each person has his or her own ideal voice. How do you find your ideal voice? In my opinion, a simple technique borrowed from Dr. Cooper Morton is the best.<sup>28</sup> Say "uh-huh" as though agreeing with someone. If you do this several times in a relaxed manner, you will have found your natural voice. Here's a phrase you can practice: "Uh-huh-please-uh-huh-take-uh-huh-a-uh-huh-card."

### *Body Language*

Body language is a language without words; yet it can say more about you in a shorter time than the most detailed introduction. If you understand and master your body language, you will have in your grasp one of the most important of communication tools. Let's take a peek in the dictionary of body language.

**FACIAL EXPRESSION.** According to scientific studies, fifty-five percent of all reactions that lead to liking someone are evoked by facial expressions, compared with thirty-eight percent from tone of voice and seven percent from what is said. Although facial expressions outweigh the other modes of communication, total effectiveness is only possible when all the components are working in unison. From the hundreds of rules, let me single out just one: *smile*. With the exception of a very few performance styles, a smile on your lips will evoke the friendliest and most communicative response.

**MOVEMENT AND GESTURE.** Movement draws and focuses attention. You should, therefore, avoid making meaningless movements. Gestures should not be uncontrolled gesticulation, but should visually underscore the spoken and unspoken text. Reinforce the verbal message with your body language. Eyes follow motion, so make only one movement per statement, or the result may become confusing. Every movement should be coordinated to express or underscore a single thought.

**THE BODY AXIS.** Imagine a line traveling from your crown straight down the center of your body. This is your axis. Your arms should only cross this body axis in exceptional cases. For example, if you need to move a deck of cards from the right side of the table to the left, you can pick up the deck with your right hand and transfer it to your left hand, which then places it on the left side of the table. This avoids having either arm cross your body axis, which would look awkward and would partially obscure your body from view. Dozens of situations like this occur in every performance.

**PANTOMIME.** You could say that pantomime is the theatrical application of body language. Imagine that you had to perform for a deaf audience. You would automatically express everything with your gestures and facial expressions. The meaning of many actions can be communicated in pantomime, using slow and clear movements. When you perform for a "normal" audience, the pantomime can underscore the spoken text. Thus, the meaning is being communicated through two mediums, and the message will be clearer, more memorable and will make a greater impression. Here's an example: It is often necessary to recapitulate the preceding events just before the climax of a routine, to heighten the dramatic tension and to emphasize the impossible nature of what is about to occur.



Pantomime can be very effective in evoking a visual memory of those events. A good example of this is given in the "Key Card in a Ribbon Spread" in *Volume 1*, page 138.

**POINTING.** You can focus the spectators' attention on a specific location by pointing to it or gesturing toward it. However, a more subtle form of pointing may be implemented through the arrangement of objects on the table. Let's assume that three Aces are face up on the table and you are about to turn the fourth Ace face up. To reinforce the focus of attention, when you turn up the first three Aces, place them on the table with their sides forming a triangle (the head of an arrow) that points at the final, face-down Ace. For another example of this sort of pointing, see "The Question Is..." in *Volume 1*, page 81.

## Style

Style is actually nothing more than the manner in which you incorporate your personality, technique and handling into your performances. In other words, style is the unified character of your performances. There is only one style that is best for you and that is your own. No other style will be as honest and convincing, or make direct contact with the audiences as quickly and stay in their memories as long as your own, sincere style. Keep in mind Dai Vernon's advice, "*Be yourself.*" How do you find your own style? How can you succeed in being yourself? How can you make a routine your own?

Philosophers tell us we are what we do. If you do something that you have copied from someone else, you won't be expressing your personality, but that other person's. This, incidentally, is why books are a better medium for teaching routines than are videotapes. A description in a book is sufficiently abstract to force you to give each phase of the handling your personal touch. On a videotape, you can see exactly what to do—and unfortunately all too many do exactly that! Many are initially afraid of being themselves in performance. Even people who are socially successful often prefer to pattern their scripts on those that have proven their worth in the mouths of others, rather than to come up with their own. Imitation as a form of inspiration is normal when beginning. But soon you are no longer a beginner, and you must then be yourself. There is no way to be yourself other than to decide—here and now—that you *will* be yourself. Only this experience will result in true confidence.

The confidence you exude in performance is one of the most important factors in controlling an audience. You will find that a mastery of card magic accomplished through self-study and performance will have a positive influence on your character, on your self-image and on your confidence.

How can you build your confidence as a performer? First, you must have a thorough understanding of your tricks and routines, both in terms of their technical demands on you as a craftsman and their theatrical demands on you as an artist. You must master the technique to the point of being able to perform it in your sleep, you must be able to speak the text so that it sounds natural and spontaneous, and you must understand the structure of the trick or routine. Such thorough understanding will produce the desired confidence and, with it, the possibility of a credible performance.

Second, confidence is gained through constantly performing, with each performance followed by critical analysis of the experience. It's not easy for an amateur to find constant performance opportunities without eventually becoming an annoyance to those around



him or her. Common sense will help you to determine how frequently you can reasonably ask your family, friends and acquaintances to be your audience.

### *Theme*

Thematic structure awakens and holds the attention of the audience. The thematic elements are the roles, phenomenon, purpose and proof. The development of theme involves both presentation and construction (a topic we will soon address). Here we will look at the four basic elements of theme just mentioned.

### *Roles*

We have already discussed how you should define your own role. In the overwhelming majority of cases you will simply be yourself. But it is just as important to define the role of the audience. What do you expect from an audience in general and, in some cases, from certain spectators in particular? What reactions do you want and why? Keep in mind that there are different kinds of audiences, which you must identify. For example, you would want to modify elements of your general presentation if your audience consists chiefly of academics or construction workers or golfing dentists or emigrants.

### *The Phenomenon*

The effect of any given trick could be presented as the result of various phenomena. As an example, let's consider "The Spectator Cuts the Aces" routine in *Volume I* (page 51). As described there, the phenomenon consists of a spectator cutting coincidentally to the four Aces. But the effect could have been presented as a demonstration of the spectator's newly found dowsing skill, had he passed a divining rod over the deck before each cut. The same trick could also demonstrate the "glove of knowledge". Give the spectator a red glove to wear on the hand used to cut the deck. The power of the glove uncovers the Aces. You could also use a mandrake root. The spectator holds the magical root in one hand while cutting the cards with the other. Or the phenomenon could be hypnosis. You place the spectator in a "hypnotic trance" and suggest that he or she will cut to the Aces. In this case, the phenomenon also determines a role to be played by the spectator. The phenomenon being demonstrated should be unusual, interesting and must fascinate the audience.

### *Purpose*

When the spectators understand the phenomenon, the purpose of the performance is to demonstrate it. Any phase that does not do this is superfluous and out of place. This element of the theme requires you to reduce the structure of the presentation and handling to their essentials.

### *Proof*

Finally, the performance of the trick or routine provides the proof that the phenomenon is genuine. Naturalness, flawless technique, timing, and other elements of performance play a decisive role here. Only when the proof is beyond reproach will the phenomenon be accepted. The only thing that matters is how the spectators interpret the proof.

Whether or not the spectators actually believe in the phenomenon afterward is usually of secondary importance. What is important is that the presentation consist of a closed circle of logical, meaningful actions, due to a well-defined theme. This creates the desired magical atmosphere and evokes the associated emotions in the spectators.



## *The Script*

The purpose of the script is to communicate and to justify the actions of the trick. Keep in mind that every spoken presentation has a script, even if you are improvising and have never written down a word. What, then, are the rules that determine the success or failure of what you say?

### *Content*

Do the research necessary to speak knowledgeably about the topics raised in your presentation. Let's assume you're performing "The Coué Test" (*Volume 1*, page 125). It is not enough to memorize and parrot the script given there. You must know something about the theme of the presentation to give your performance lasting credibility. What would you think of someone who gave an important talk on Japan, for example, when you found out that this person had never been there and barely understood Japanese?

### *Studying the Script*

One frequently hears the question of whether a script should be formally written out and memorized. In my opinion, any performer, whether fledgling or advanced, can learn a lot from writing out a script. I clearly remember the first acting class I took, in which I was required to write out the script for the trick on which we were working. Until then, I didn't realize that a magic trick had a script! As I began to write down what I said when I performed, the scales fell from my eyes and I saw the enormous importance of the script. In transcribing what you say, you will notice just how many "ehs", "hmmms", "isn't that rights?" and similar empty expressions you use. These are the result of not knowing exactly what you should be saying. Everyone should write out the script for a presentation at least once. I assure you that from then on you will see the world differently. How you proceed from there depends on your mode of learning and your performance style. There are some famous magicians who maintain that they never write a script, but follow a pre-determined train of thought around which they improvise as inspired by the situations presented. Professional speakers recommend that opening and closing sentences be written out and memorized, while the rest can be composed more loosely from key words and phrases adapted to the demands of each situation. I still prefer to write out a script completely in the early phases of learning a trick. I then modify the script as it is tested in performance.

### *Spontaneity*

It's most important that your words sound spontaneous. No, that doesn't contradict what you've just read. First you must understand your script, so that later you need not think about it. How can you make a script sound spontaneous when you have analyzed it so precisely? First, each performance will introduce fresh nuances, which you adopt, while leaving others out. Eventually the script will lose its original, rigid structure. You may keep key phrases intact all your life, while adapting the rest to each performing situation. Secondly, after some experience you will know what reactions and comments your performance naturally elicits. You can then simply wait for those reactions and comments to occur, or think about how you can evoke them. In either case, when the reactions and comments come and you react instantly to them (having anticipated them), it seems spontaneous. Always try to make your comments sound as if you had just thought of them.

### *Original Scripts*

If you write your own scripts, unless you are a genius, you must do some advance research. Anything can serve as a source of inspiration: newspapers, films, libraries, conversations.



Carry a notebook with you to capture spontaneous inspirations. Useful tools include collections of quotations, humorous writings, popular science books, encyclopedias and compilations of proverbs, sayings, aphorisms, witticisms and headlines. Write down anything that sounds like it might be useful. Later, as you develop your script, you may find opportunities to insert an original, a scientific or a witty remark. But use common sense: Don't make your script a string of proverbs and quotes. Normally, in the editing process, you will eliminate as much as ninety-five percent of the material you gather, and that's good. Do not, though, throw out the excised material. File it under appropriate key words. You may find it perfect when you're developing a script for another trick. However, remember as you do this that the script must fit your personality and performing style if you are to be credible when delivering it.

### *The Meaning of a Word*

Each word evokes images in the mind of the spectator and stirs up related emotions. It is therefore imperative that each word be carefully weighed before being used. Speak with the knowledge that each of your words will have an effect upon your spectators as they watch and listen to you. If, for example, you are wearing a blindfold that allows you a downward peek along the sides of your nose, it would be a serious mistake to say, "*Concentrate on your card. Yes, I clearly see that it is a red card.*" This phrasing suggests that you actually can see. Don't use a negative suggestion when a positive one will communicate the same idea. If you need someone to choose a red card, don't say, "*Please think of a card, but not a black card; make it a red one.*" As soon as you say "*black*" the spectator will think black, evoking exactly the image you wish to avoid. It is better to say, "*Think of a card, a red card; either a heart or a diamond, whichever you prefer.*" Often you will see the advice given to avoid the word *trick* in your script, as it can have negative connotations in some people's minds. *Piece* is a word that can be used in its place, as can *experiment*, *demonstration* and *phenomenon*.

### *The Silent Script*

The silent script consists of words that you say *silently* to yourself in performance. But why should you be saying anything to yourself that no one else will hear? The silent script coordinates your own subconscious actions. It is particularly effective in producing the proper facial expressions. If the spectator is shuffling the deck or counting some cards in a packet, you don't want to divert the audience's attention by speaking when they should be concentrating on the spectator's actions. Without a silent script, you risk appearing bored or indifferent. You can prevent this by saying to yourself, "*That's right, shuffle the cards thoroughly. It's very important that they be well shuffled,*" etc. You must know what you should be thinking, especially when you aren't speaking. Believe me, the consequences of your unspoken script are very real. It will help you believe in the miracles you perform and so give your presentation greater credibility.

### *The Script Structure*

When writing, you have the option of composing lengthy, complex sentences. Anyone who doesn't understand the sentence the first time can always go back and re-read it. That is not an option with spoken scripts. What is said is said, and should not need repeating. This means that you will need to speak in smaller units of meaning. It is best to limit each sentence to one piece of information, which you reinforce whenever possible with body language. Prior to the climax of a trick, review the most important elements of the



presentation, to assure that even the least attentive spectators can understand and appreciate what is going on.

### *Logic*

Those phases of the trick not strictly required by the effect, but imposed by the secret techniques that achieve it, can be given logical justification by the script. Having a card signed has little intrinsic meaning, but can be given some by saying, "Please sign the card, to make sure that it is the only one like it in the world." Or "Please put your signature and today's date on the card to commemorate this event." Or "Please initial your decision." For business people this last request makes perfect sense. With a little forethought, each aspect of a trick can be justified.

## *The Audience*

The relationship of the performer to the audience has a critical influence on the entire presentation—which is why we are going to discuss several important factors that have great bearing on that relationship.

### *Dealing with the Audience*

It is always useful to assume the best about your spectators until they provide evidence to the contrary. Goethe said, "When we treat people as they are, we make them worse. On the other hand, when we treat them as though they were already what they should be, we bring them to where they need to be brought." You will find many thoughts on this idea, in other contexts, in the forthcoming discussion of "Outs" (page 461).

A practical rule of communication states that you generally receive the same respect from others that you bestow on them. Greet your audience with respect and modesty. This doesn't exclude a confident appearance. On the contrary, the more your confidence is based on genuine knowledge and ability, the more conviction your performing persona will have. Even if you believe you can deduce the profession, social status and intelligence of audience members from their appearance, always assume that you are performing for important people. Never underestimate the intelligence of your audience. Spectators are more observant, critical and intelligent than many magicians are willing to believe.

Take the time to listen to your audience during and after your performances. Don't be afraid to take an audience member aside, every once in a while and honestly ask if he or she has an explanation for any of your effects. You will need a certain amount of assurance to do this, since often the spectator will bluntly tell you how one of your tricks (or maybe several) works. Usually the problem is not that the trick is faulty, but that it was not performed well enough, either from a technical or presentational standpoint. Don't be afraid of such conversations. The spectator in question is generally flattered that you want his or her opinion. This has two consequences: First, the spectator will keep the secret out of loyalty to you; and second, magic has probably gained a new friend. It is a worthwhile experience for you personally, as it lets you see the trick from the spectator's perspective. Go back and restudy the tricks that failed to deceive, so that next time no one will be able to deduce the true explanation. If you carry out this program, your magic will improve.

### *Interaction with the Audience*

Communication with the audience is the most important requisite for a successful performance. However, communication does not mean that you simply talk to the spectators,



but that you develop an interactive relationship with them. Here are a few tips on how this can be accomplished.

Always be aware of your surroundings. Some performers get so wrapped up in their memorized script that they become totally oblivious to what is going on around them. To prevent this, you must have practiced the techniques and rehearsed the routine with the script to such a degree that you could perform it in your sleep. This will allow you to focus your attention simultaneously on both the audience as a whole and on individual spectators. To do this, direct certain remarks to a specific spectator. For example, in some situations you might say to a lady, "Ma'am, I know what you're thinking, but are too polite to say out loud. You're thinking: If I could shuffle that deck myself, then he wouldn't be able to do his magic. You needn't say a thing. I insist that you shuffle the cards." You then hand her the deck to shuffle. Or "I will repeat it for this pleasant fellow, who is at heart a sincere skeptic. But ultimately, skeptics are my best audience." Or you might use a friendly wink as you say, "You haven't done anything yet. Please hold this card in your hand." Or rather than having a spectator name a card, say, "Ma'am, please tell us your lucky card. I'm sure you have a favorite one." In a small enough group it is possible to address everyone individually in the course of the performance, establishing a rapport with the entire audience. Once contact has been established, you must take care to maintain it throughout the show. To do this, look briefly at each of the spectators periodically, taking care to avoid playing favorites by looking longer or more often at those who strike you as more favorably disposed toward you.

### *Humor, Comedy and the Joke*

Humor in a presentation functions both to communicate and to misdirect. In all cases it should be subordinate to the magical effect. If you present yourself as a magician, comedy must serve the magic. Otherwise, you are a comedian. Let's examine the most common forms of comedy and the role they play in a performance.

#### *Personal Humor*

I have good news for those of you who wish you were funnier and wittier in performance than you are in "real life". A well-constructed and well-performed magic routine already embodies sufficient comedy. It is helpful if you have a good sense of humor, but that is not the same thing as being a comedian. Everyone has a sense a humor, although some lose it when they are under stress. If you don't take yourself too seriously when performing card tricks, I can assure you that your natural humor will shine through, and humor communicates composure and intelligence.

#### *Situation Comedy*

Situation comedy consists of a funny circumstance resulting directly from the action. It can be a particular handling, such as having a spectator pretend to shuffle an imaginary deck of cards, then noting that he has "dropped" one. But it can be verbal humor too, such as a comment that bears directly on the situation. For instance, you might introduce a trick by saying, "This is something for people who like these sorts of things." Or you might ask a spectator to "Place the deck anywhere on the table—and now push it over here."

Dai Vernon, the "Professor", said, "Comedy born of bewilderment is the only comedy that should be in magic." In fact, the most common reaction of spectators to an effect they cannot explain is laughter that breaks the mounting tension. This means that even the most



serious presentation always embodies comedic elements, as the spectators will almost always react to an effect with some form of laughter.

The longer you perform a trick, the more spontaneous situations you'll find. In some cases these situations can be very funny, and you should write them down after the performance. Once I said to a spectator, *"If you don't trust me, you can replace the card in the deck yourself."* This prompted another spectator to say, *"Are you sure he can trust himself?"* I immediately added this to my script. After I had been using this line for a few weeks, someone in the audience added, *"Now we'll hold you responsible, Fred!"* I noted down the new line and the result was an amusing verbal sequence that could be employed in many tricks. The comedy of most of the routines in my repertoire is based on the humor that arises naturally from the situation. I regard this as the best kind of humor. Situation comedy seems spontaneous, sincere and genuinely funny. The comedy forms we will discuss next function independently, but their use is justified only in connection with a situation.

### Gags

A gag, as defined by Duden's German dictionary, is *"a funny and an effective—but not a dramatically necessary—idea; a comic improvisation."* Although a gag may not actually be dramatically necessary, it can play an important psychological role in creating deception. Here's one example: I often hold the deck toward a spectator with the request that he cut the cards. As soon as he extends his hand, I give the deck a Charlier cut (Volume I, page 172), saying, *"Thanks, that's enough. Everything is automated these days."* This humorous exchange results in making the cut a stronger and more memorable action. A visual impression of the cards being fairly cut is clearly placed in the minds of the spectators. Yet, because you have cut the cards yourself, you can easily hold a break between the closing halves, allowing you to riffle force the original top card of the deck; or you can cut at an advantageous spot, bringing a certain card or cards to a desired position.

### Verbal Humor

Comical sayings, sparingly and intelligently introduced, can support the effectiveness of a trick. There are entire collections of nothing but such sayings. A few classifications of verbal humor are jests, bon mots, quotes, slips of the tongue, exaggerations, malapropisms and rhymes. You can find them in humor collections and often in everyday situations.

### The Role of Humor

The role of humor is comparable to that of flourishes: It supports the psychological and dramatic aspects of an effect. You can use a well-placed humorous remark to help spectators better remember a procedure. I will often divide the deck into three parts and have each shuffled by a different person. *"You know what? Let's use job sharing to shuffle the cards. Each of you shuffle a section."* When I want the spectators to remember the shuffle, I simply say, *"As you'll recall, the three of you did a job-sharing shuffle."* This is more memorable than if I had the deck shuffled by a single spectator without commentary.

On the other hand, it is also possible to use humor to make certain phases of the procedure less memorable, or to confuse the spectator's memory so that the order of events is transposed. To return to our earlier example, as the spectators shuffle the deck in committee, you watch with amusement with your hands in your pockets, palming out the four Aces, which you have previously removed from the deck. The "job-sharing shuffle" prevents the spectators from noticing the absence of cards, even if you had extracted as many



as twelve, since each person is holding only a portion of the deck. It is easy then to add the palmed cards as you collect the packets from the three spectators, laughing yourself once more about the committee situation you have created. When you refer to the procedure later, everyone will recall only that the deck was thoroughly examined and shuffled by three people; but they will fail to remember the moments most relevant to the secret of the trick. Every properly chosen comic situation should play an equally functional role to justify its use.

Usually gags, wordplay and situation comedy will produce laughter. On provoking this response, many performers conclude that they have "entertained" the spectators—and that is the only demand they make on humor in particular, and on presentation in general. I believe that, in magic, these tools should never be introduced simply to "entertain" or to get a reaction. They must also play a communicative or misdirective role. Only when used intelligently, do these moments give your performance a polished, artistic dimension.

## *Diverse Presentational Strategies*

### *Conflict*

Build conflict situations into your presentations. More than anything else, spectators are interested in conflicts in life and between people. When you, the performer, find yourself in an awkward situation, magic is the most marvelous and justifiable method for getting out of it. Later in this chapter, under the title "Disasters, Disruptions and Outs" (page 461), I will discuss some of these situations. After reading and understanding them, try to create some of these circumstances deliberately, but in a way that is planned and controlled. By responding in an apparently spontaneous and successful fashion to spectators' demands, you will earn the reputation of a miracle worker. Anyone can, with sufficient practice, perform choreographed, rehearsed routines; but to comply with spontaneous requests borders on the miraculous.

Here's an example of the deliberate manufacture of conflict and its resolution: Force a card on a spectator. Then hold the deck gingerly in a spread between your hands as you request, "Please replace the card in the center of the deck." Some spectators will suspect that the cards are manipulated when the card is returned. As you carefully shuffle the deck, review the procedure for the audience: "First, you shuffled the deck thoroughly, then you chose any card and replaced it in the deck, which you shuffled yourself." This will provoke a protest, as someone will certainly point out that you have shuffled the deck at the end, and not the spectator. Look a bit embarrassed. "Well, yes, I am responsible for the impossible, but miracles..." Pause. "I'll make an exception this time. Please shuffle the cards yourself." If you have won the spectator's sympathy, the request to shuffle will probably be declined as unnecessary, unless the spectator takes pleasure in seeing you squirm. In either case, victory is yours. Pursue the topic aggressively: "Out of the question. I insist that you shuffle the deck yourself. I will not continue until you have thoroughly shuffled the cards, before and after." Since the card was forced, you may, of course, locate and control it after the shuffle, using the spread cull (Volume 1, page 187) or any one of a number of techniques.

So-called "sucker tricks" like "The Coué Test" (Volume 1, page 125) or tricks like "Metamorphosis" and "The Lucky Coin" (Volume 1, pages 239 and 241 respectively) are further examples of this beloved stratagem of feigned difficulty and its successful resolution.



Of course, the story accompanying the effect can incorporate conflicts itself. Two examples of tricks employing this dramatic strategy are "The Acrobat Family" (Volume 1, page 123) and "A Phenomenal Memory" (Volume 1, page 145).

### *Personification*

When an object takes on human characteristics, it has greater relevance to the spectator. Examples of this include "The Ambitious Card" (page 337) and "The Acrobat Family" card signed. This directly associates the card with a person, and heightens audience interest. The audience no longer wonders what happens to the cards, but what happens to the spectator's card.

### *Objects*

It is generally best to use normal looking objects. You can borrow these, although it is completely justifiable and often much more practical to provide your own. Who in your audience, for example, would be likely to have with them a green permanent marker that will write with a thick, clear line on the face of a playing card? But never use a prop that raises the suspicion that it was specifically made for use in a trick. Even the least critical, most supportive spectator will recognize that this prop is somehow responsible for the effect. Once this suspicion occurs, it is impossible to create an atmosphere that evokes the impossible. For that reason, serious magicians stay away from all obviously mass-produced props that are sold in magic stores; for no matter how clever and ingenious they might be, they will never fascinate in a true magical sense. As with most every rule, though, the expert will sense those instances when such guidelines can be successfully ignored.

### *Presentation and Construction*

As I have already observed, it is in the nature of such theoretical topics as those we are dealing with that they ultimately blend into an interlocking whole. Therefore, although I will soon approach the topics of construction and presentation in greater detail, I feel it appropriate at this point to introduce a few issues concerning them.

### *Effect*

At the very core of the study of presentation is the effect. Never lose sight of it. No one has defined the essence of a magical effect as simply and clearly as Ascarior: "The effect is the contrast between the situation at the beginning and that in the end." Here's a simple example: You display the Jack of Clubs and place it face down on the spectator's hand. He then places his other hand on top of it. You make a magical gesture, sprinkle some magic powder over it or say some magic words, which can be comical or mysterious, depending on your performing style. The spectator turns up the card, which is now seen to be the Ace of Hearts! What is the magical effect, and what effect does it have on the spectator? When you initially show the Jack of Clubs this isn't magic in itself because it's just the Jack of Clubs. When you eventually show the Ace of Hearts, this isn't magic either, because it's just the Ace of Hearts. Where then, you may ask, is the magic? Well, it's not in the cards nor in your hands; it's in the head of the spectator. Here's what happens in his mind. He will recall that you displayed the Jack of Clubs and placed it face down on his palm. This is the situation at the beginning. He must be firmly convinced that you have shown the Jack of Clubs and placed it face down on his hand. The more room for doubt he has concerning this, or can afterward develop, the weaker the effect will be for him. Next a magical



ritual is performed (such as a magical gesture), which from a dramaturgical viewpoint is the cause of the transformation. Finally, the Ace of Hearts is displayed. This is the situation in the end. Initially, the spectator is surprised that it is no longer the Jack of Clubs and he tries to discover how it changed. If the situation at the beginning is crystal clear and absolutely nothing happened afterward that would permit a physical exchange, then he will be at a loss for an explanation. So he looks for other solutions; for example, perhaps the card is treated with heat sensitive chemicals. He soon abandons this theory because he can examine the card; or maybe the card is from his own deck. Only when he has eliminated for himself all logical solutions available to him, solutions that could link the initial situation to the final one, will he cease his intellectual search and cross over the rainbow, or fall into Alice's rabbit hole (to borrow two of Juan Tamariz's favorite metaphors).

Consequently, in constructing a trick, it is a primary task of the presentation to emphasize the situation at the beginning, assuring that it is clearly communicated, so that it will be clearly remembered in the end.

### *The Rule of Three*

The number three and the unity formed by three elements has deeply symbolic meaning. This fact can be used to great advantage in the construction and presentation of a trick or routine. Many classic tricks embody the dynamic of The Rule of Three. Examples include the cups and balls with three cups, three balls, and three final loads. Or a traditional Ace assembly, in which three Aces join a fourth, repeating the same basic effect three times. Or the "Homing Card Plus" routine (page 288), in which the card travels three times to the pocket, not to mention the first phase of "The Cards of Capristrano" (page 292).

### *Applause*

It is not simply that applause is a performer's lifeblood. Properly timed, applause serves to release tension in the audience and allows for the building of fresh tension. In addition, applause is, along with laughter and verbal interjections, the only way the audience can show you that they understand and appreciate your efforts. Applause shows a sympathy with the performer and an approval of his work. Therefore, it is an important mode of communication.

The applause an audience gives, and how much is given is actually your responsibility. Run through your presentation in your mind or on paper, and decide where you want applause and for how long. But how do you stimulate applause, without blatantly asking for it, as some performers do with such lines as "*Normally the audience claps at this point.*"

As a rule, applause is stimulated by good construction, timing and body language techniques. It is often enough simply to stand or sit calmly at the end of a trick, looking at the audience and smiling. There are also various "applause cues" that provoke the appropriate response. For example, holding your hands palm up in front of your body, about eighteen inches apart; or holding an object, such as a chosen card that you have just turned face up, near your face for a few seconds without moving it, as you smile at the audience.

Another technique for stimulating applause at the appropriate moment is to make an announcement: "*If I succeed in catching the card you selected and signed, from among the fifty-two cards that I will scatter in the air, you will have witnessed a miracle!*" Although it is generally better not to announce the effect in advance, in some instances it can be a useful ploy.



Here is a method that is much more subtle than you might think. Wait a few seconds after the end of an effect. If, at that point, the applause is not forthcoming, because the spectators are completely surprised and bewildered, clap your hands once, as if to say, "There, that's done!" Then immediately move your hands into an applause-cue position for a few seconds. This technique is even more effective if you use it from the very start of your performance, conditioning the audience to respond to it. Here is how I use it:

When I get my first round of applause, which generally comes right after I've been introduced, I clap my hands, smile and strike an applause-cue position. This position, by the way, should not be modelled on the Las Vegas style "show-biz" broad smile and gesture, but rather on a personal body posture that feels comfortable to you and simply says, "Thank you, I'm happy you like it." Several times during the performance, when I do get applause I repeat the exact sequence of actions. Eventually most audience members become conditioned to the association of my behavior with their applause. The next time I want applause but don't get it, I clap my hands, smile and move into my applause-cue position. Understand that this only works if your trick is very good and the reason your applause isn't forthcoming is that the audience is too surprised to applaud. This actually can happen quite often. This form of cueing always works—see, you just applauded!

Variations in tempo often generate spontaneous applause. Depending on your style, you might work faster and louder at the climax, or slower and softer.

### Concluding Remarks

More than twenty-three centuries before Einstein, Democritus wrote: "Sweet and bitter, cold and warm—just as surely as do the colors, all these things exist exclusively in opinion, and not in reality." Everything that has been said about the subject since is simply a refinement of this thought. The only thing that matters is what the spectators *think* they saw, not what they really saw or the actual state of affairs. That, for them, is the only reality that exists. It is necessary, therefore, to understand the means by which spectators perceive and the strategies they employ to create their subjective reality. You can then apply this understanding to the presentation of your magic. Only then can you hope to deceive completely and to *entertain* in the broadest sense of the term. I hope that in this section I have given you some useful hints toward achieving those goals. I'll end this section with a poem by Fernando Pessoa:

To be great, be complete:  
Do not distort or deny what is yours.  
Be entirely in each thing. Put yourself  
Into your smallest action.  
Thus the whole moon shines in every lake,  
For it stands high enough.

### Recommended Reading

#### GENERAL:

Burger, Eugene, *Secrets and Mysteries for the Close-up Entertainer* (Excelsior!! Productions: Arlington Heights; 1982).

Burger, Eugene, *Intimate Power* (Philip R. Willmarth: Arlington Heights; 1983).



Burger, Eugene, *The Performance of Close-up Magic* (Kaufman and Greenberg: Silver Spring, 1987). Any book by Eugene Burger is worthy of your attention, but these three titles are particularly worthwhile.

Davies, Philippa, *Your Total Image: How to Communicate Success* (Piatkus: London; 1990, ISBN 0-86188-842-1).

Maskelyne, Nevil and David Devant, *Our Magic* (Fleming Book Company: York, PA; 1911). A classic work on magic theory.

Ortiz, Darwin, *Strong Magic* (Kaufman and Greenberg: Silver Spring; 1994). This most wonderful book will trigger countless thought-provoking moments and give you many solid performance ideas.

Sharpe, S. H., *Neo Magic* (2nd revised edition, George Johnson: London; 1946). One of my favorite authors in the field of magic theory. Written in easily understood language, this book contains many thoughts on the psychological and symbolic foundations of magic. I strongly recommend all Mr. Sharpe's books and articles, but this one is required reading.

Tarbell, Harlan, *The Tarbell Course in Magic* (D. Robbins & Co., Inc.: Brooklyn; 1941-1993). This eight-volume work is primarily devoted to the technical aspects of tricks, and in that regard it is a highly recommended collection of general magic. However, the volumes of this course do include intelligently composed articles by Dr. Tarbell on history, psychology, program construction, advertising, etc.

#### BIOGRAPHIES:

Bamberg, David, *Illusion Show* (Meyerbooks: Glenwood; 1988, ISBN 0-91638-36-7). For me, this and Robert-Houdin's autobiography are the very best of their kind.

Robert-Houdin, *The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic* (Magico Magazine: New York; 1868).

Robert-Houdin, *King of the Conjurers* (Dover: New York; 1858, LC 64-15516). The autobiography of the father of modern magic.

#### COMMUNICATION:

Carnegie, Dale, *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (Pocket Books: New York; 1982, ISBN 0-671-72365-0). Written like all of Carnegie's books: entertaining, with many examples from real life. Very good suggestions.

Fisher, Roger and William Ury, *Getting to Yes* (Viking Penguin: New York; 1991, ISBN 0-14-015735-2). Methods and strategies of influencing everyday, business and political interactions decisively in your favor.

Harris, Thomas, *I'm OK, You're OK* (Avon: New York; 1974, ISBN 0-380-00772-X). An introduction to the communications model of transactional analysis. Very practically oriented. Worth reading.

O'Connor, Joseph and John Seymour, *Introducing NLP: Psychological Skills for Understanding and Influencing People* (revised edition, The Aquarian Press: Dallas; 1993, ISBN 1-85538-344-6). Excellent!

Tamariz, Juan, *The Five Points in Magic* (Editorial Frakson: Madrid; 1988).

#### BODY LANGUAGE:

Morris, Desmond, *Mamcatching* (H. N. Abrams: New York; 1977) and:



Morris, Desmond, *Bodytalk: the Meaning of Human Gestures* (Crown Publishing Group: New York; 1995, ISBN 0-517-88355-4).

#### RHETORIC:

Carnegie, Dale, *How to Develop Self-confidence and Influence People by Public Speaking* (Pocket Books: New York; 1991, ISBN 0-671-74607-3). A collection of "recipes" for strengthening your confidence. While rather superficial in its treatment, it nonetheless contains fundamental truths on communication psychology, given in easily understood terms. Recommended reading for anyone who performs publicly.

Carnegie, Dale, *The Quick and Effective Way to Public Speaking* (Pocket Books: New York; 1990, ISBN 0-671-72400-2). Similar thematically to the above. Worth reading.

Leeds, Dorothy, *Powerspeak: the Complete Guide to Public Speaking and Presentation* (Berkley: New York; 1991, ISBN 0-425-12489-4). An excellent book that lists almost everything one needs to know when talking in front of strangers whose attention you would like to capture and hold.

#### THEATER:

Benedetti, Jean, *Stanislavski, an Introduction to the System* (Theater Arts Books: New York; 1982). A presentation of the system taught by the world famous theater pedagogue. Especially worthwhile is his teaching on how to express emotions convincingly.

Fitzkee, Dariel, *The Fitzkee Trilogy* (Lee Jacobs: Pomeroy; 1943-1945). Of the three volumes, I particularly recommend *Showmanship for Magicians* and *Magic by Misdirection*. They contain outstanding thoughts on putting together a program, choreography, the theory of misdirection, etc.

Nelms, Henning, *Magic and Showmanship* (Dover: New York; 1969, ISBN 0-486-22337-X). Detailed instructions from a theater director, treating the dramatic and theatrical foundations of trick interpretation. Everything is discussed that makes the performance of a routine more professional. Absolutely essential reading! Unreservedly recommended.

#### SCRIPTS:

Lorraine, Sid, *A Talk about Patter* (Jeff Busby Magic: Wallace; 1983). Two audiocassettes with a worksheet and booklet.

#### HUMOR:

Perret, Gene, *Comedy Writing Step by Step: How to Write and Sell Your Sense of Humor* (Samuel French: New York; 1990, ISBN 0-573-60605-6) and:

Perret, Gene, *How to Hold Your Audience with Humor: a Guide to More Effective Speaking* (Writer's Digest Books: Cincinnati; 1984, ISBN 0-89879-136-7). Both books are written by a professional comedy writer and should prove insightful to anyone wishing to write his own scripts and instill personal humor into them.

Piddington, Ralph, *From Plato to Freud: the Psychology of Laughter* (Gamut Press Inc.: New York; 1963, LC 63-22097). Excellent research on the subject of how and why humor works. Many chapters can be adapted directly to magic.



# Construction

Having broached the subject of construction, let us now examine it in greater depth. The construction describes how a trick is put together. It tells us how all the principles are combined to work as a whole upon the spectators' minds. We will first examine the elements that go into the construction of a single trick, then those for a routine comprised of several tricks, and finally those for a program made up of several routines.

## *The Construction of a Trick*

Every card trick has an underlying structure. Ultimately, this is what is responsible for the spectators' experience of astonishment and wonder, in other words, the *magical effect*.

### *The Magical Effect*

Let's assume a card has been selected and shuffled back into the deck. The spectator cuts the cards and names a number. The performer deals off that many cards and the card at the number named is revealed to be the spectator's. What exactly is the magical effect of this experience, as perceived by the spectator? Obviously, it is the impossibility of the spectator's card turning up at the spectator's number, in spite the deck being shuffled, which renders it impossible for anyone to know the location of the selection. The effect is produced by an intellectual reaction to the various procedures that make up the trick. The degree of surprise, even wonder, that the spectators feel is governed by the extent to which they follow the various phases of the construction, compare them with each other, and ultimately see no rational connection between them capable of producing the end result. This is the basis of card tricks, as it is, in fact, of all magic. Incidentally, a card trick can have several effects. For example, "Homing Card Plus" (page 288) has three.

So what are the elements that must be considered if a trick is to arouse and maintain an audience's interest, and what is necessary for each phase of the handling to seem logical and credible?

### *The Effect as Orientation*

Never lose sight of the effect and the reactions the spectators should have to it. The effect serves as your compass in directing you to the climax of a trick. It tells you which procedures are necessary and appropriate if the trick is to be meaningful, magically effective and entertaining. The famous mountain climber and management trainer, Reinhold Messner, who has scaled all the world's highest peaks, says, "*Before I take the first step, I'm already thinking of the last.*"

### *Consistency*

To arrange all the procedures of a routine in a logically consistent manner is an important challenge of construction. One often encounters tricks that fail to do this. How can you assure that a trick is consistent?

THE "AS IF" PRINCIPLE. Every detail of the presentation must be consistent with the theme. Always ask yourself, If I could really do what I pretend to do, would I do it like this? If you really had a photographic memory, would you proceed as described in "A Phenomenal Memory" (page 145, Volume 1)? If you can answer Yes to this question at each point in a



routine, then it has the desired consistency. Otherwise, presentational strategies have to be used to make it appear consistent.

**DISCREPANCIES.** Discrepancies are inconsistencies, contradictions or deviations in the procedure of the trick. They can easily be eliminated in the construction, but it takes effort. Begin by making two lists. On one write down every step of each phase of the trick that would be necessary if the demonstration were genuine (review my remarks on "Theme", page 414). On the second list write down what you actually do. Strictly speaking, every point on the second list that deviates from the first is a discrepancy. These must be either eliminated or justified with intelligent and logical presentation. "Detours" required by the method must be justified with a corresponding presentational strategy if consistency is to be restored.

**DISTRACTIONS.** Anything which neither clarifies nor enriches the presentation is a distraction. As Aristotle said long ago, "*That which does not add, detracts.*" One is often tempted to add a humorous element that has no constructive function. It is essential to recognize distractions and eliminate them. They only make the trick longer than necessary and less interesting.

**THE POSITIVE INSERTION.** By this I mean an action inserted to exert a positive effect on the construction of a trick. A positive insertion can be a single gesture to separate the forming of a break under two cards from the subsequent double turnover of those cards; or the commentary in the crisscross force (*Volume 1*, page 85) that separates the crossing of the packets from the taking of the force card. In the trick "Seventh Son of a Seventh Son" (*Volume 1*, page 101) the by-play with the matches is a positive insertion that justifies your taking the deck back from the spectator (during which you secretly bring a needed card from the bottom to the top). Positive insertions are desirable and improve the quality of construction. This category was defined and the term for it coined by Arturo de Ascanio, as were the next category and term.

**THE NEGATIVE INSERTION.** This refers to unnecessary or improperly placed actions that disturb the consistency of a trick. An example (which you should not emulate): The performer has a card chosen and returned to the deck. He then displays a divining rod and explains its origins and functions at great length. Only then is the spectator asked to take the rod and use it to find the chosen card. The digression with the divining rod becomes a negative insertion at this point in the trick. The performer's explanation of the rod should have been done at the start of the trick, prior to the selection of the card. If given after the selection has been returned to the deck, the spectators might forget the card or be unsure that it was replaced in the deck by the person who chose it. Regrettably, examples of negative insertion are frequent in the literature of magic.

Negative insertions must be recognized and eliminated, as they detract from the consistency and logical construction of a trick. Consistency creates a logical connection between the actions in a trick. When that connection is broken by discrepancies, distractions or negative insertions it destroys the audience's illusion—the bubble is burst.

### *Surprise and Suspense*

Depending on how you combine the communicative elements of a trick, you can produce either surprise or suspense. Both can be useful, but you must know when to use each. A good trick often employs both suspense and surprise. Good examples of such a



combination are found in "The Coué Test" (Volume 1, page 125) and "Homing Card Plus" (page 288).

**SUSPENSE.** To produce suspense, the spectators must know what will or could happen. In performing "A Phenomenal Memory" (Volume 1, page 145), suspense results from the spectators knowing that you are attempting to locate a card through the exercise of pure memory. They want to see if you can do it.

**SURPRISE.** If, in the same trick, you turned the selected card face down after locating it and showed it to be the only blue-backed card in a red-backed deck, the spectators would be surprised. No one expected that. But you would need a very good reason for the card to be blue or the surprise would dissipate, since the contrasting back has no connection with the established context of the effect. Misplaced surprise creates confusion, rather than making a trick more memorable.

### *The Construction of a Routine*

A routine is a combination of several tricks or effects with a unified theme. While there is no prescribed length for a routine, they frequently last eight to ten minutes. An example of a routine in this volume is "The Ambitious Card" (page 337), a combination of six effects with a unified theme and a clear progression.

#### *Structure*

The tricks of a routine should have a logical thematic progression. The opening trick should serve to introduce the theme. The second effect—which can be an independent trick—develops the theme and creates a complication or conflict. Finally, the routine concludes with the strongest trick, which generally resolves the conflict. Each trick adds new information or illuminates the theme from a different perspective. This dramatic progression is necessary for a routine.

#### *The Principle of Mounting Interest*

The tricks you select for a routine must build on one another. Each trick must be more astonishing than its predecessors and should rule out any possible explanations for them. "The Ambitious Card" begins with a card rising twice to the top, which introduces, then reinforces the theme. In the third phase, the card is signed, eliminating the possible use of duplicate cards, thus instilling suspense. Nonetheless, the card comes to the top, and in doing this some comedy is introduced. In the fourth phase, the card not only rises to the top, it travels some distance to do so, creating increasing surprise. Finally, the card is "marked" with an obvious bend, yet it still comes to the top, culminating the routine with a combination of tension, surprise and comedy!

From this example you can see how the level interest aroused by a routine should not merely be maintained, but should increase until it reaches a climax.

#### *Examples of Routines*

Here are examples of routines that you can put together using effects from this course.

**AN ESOTERIC ROUTINE:** Taking esoteric powers as your theme, you can introduce it with "The Shamus Card" (Volume 1, page 80). The theme can be further elaborated with "The Jumping Pulse" (Volume 1, page 227), in which an audience member tests the phenomenon on you. Then conclude on a mysterious note with "The Magus Card" (Volume 1, page 162). Your script might turn on the abilities hidden deep within each of us.



**ANTHROPOMORPHIC CARDS:** Here the theme is the human-like personalities displayed by cards, and their individual characteristics. Open with "Court Card Conclave" (*Volume 1*, page 63), explaining the attraction exerted by certain cards for their peers. Follow this with "The Acrobat Family" (*Volume 1*, page 123), showing that training is everything. Finally, finish with "The Ambitious Card" (page 337), proving that cards do indeed mirror the characteristics of humanity.

**A VIRTUOSO ROUTINE:** Begin with "Aces Off the Cuff" (page 265) and finish with "Royal Flush Finale" (page 114, *Volume 1*), which incorporates multiple effects within itself. This is a short routine, but one requiring advance preparation, making it well suited as an introductory routine of an extended program. A logical presentation could revolve around cheating. All principles governing the construction of a trick are equally valid in the construction of routines; and, as we shall see, are just as important for the construction of one's program.

## *The Construction of the Program*

A program is put together from several routines or tricks, or a combination of routines and tricks. Once again, time is not the defining factor of a program. Ideally, a program might last anywhere from twenty to forty minutes, but under appropriate circumstances it might be a full evening's entertainment running ninety minutes.

To begin, you should put together several routines. If your first routine garners favorable audience response, you may wish to perform a second routine, and possibly a third. Just keep in mind the universal rule of show business: Leave the audience wanting more; that is, stop before they have had enough.

Some professionals insist that a thematic thread should run through the program, tying everything together. I believe this is particularly true for silent, choreographed acts. But speaking magicians—and all the tricks in this course were conceived for the speaking performer—have their own personalities and the manner in which they interact with their audiences to pull their programs together. Of course, a unifying theme is possible for such performers, and can be an inspirational stimulus for presentations and constructions.

However, many successful professionals prove that this is not necessary. What is necessary is the choice of one's repertoire and its arrangement in the program. Let's examine what I mean by this.

### *Choice of Repertoire*

On what basis should tricks be chosen to create a program? I agree with the motto of the cigar magnate, Zino Davidoff: "In life, human beings must learn to be satisfied with the best," and with Oscar Wilde when he said, "I have a very simple taste—from everything the best!" Only the best tricks are good enough to form a part of your programs. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. **DO I LIKE THE TRICK MYSELF?** Only perform tricks that appeal to you, as these are the only ones you can present with enthusiasm and conviction. All too often performers choose to do tricks simply because they have seen someone else achieve success with them on television.
2. **DOES IT FIT MY STYLE?** If there is no way to modify a trick to conform to your style, don't try to add it to your program. It must fit you as a person if it is to fit into your program.



3. IS IT A WELL-CONSTRUCTED TRICK? Dai Vernon said: "Perform only tricks that you would do if you really could do magic." The thoughts expressed earlier in "The Construction of a Trick" will serve you well in applying this criterion.

4. WHAT PURPOSE DOES IT SERVE IN THE PROGRAM? If your program has a theme, then every trick must function in relation to it. If a trick does not fit into the concept of your program, then no matter how good the trick is, it will seem out of place and will detract from the quality of the other tricks.

5. IS THIS THE BEST METHOD I KNOW TO ACCOMPLISH THIS EFFECT? This requires you to do a bit of research. When you have found several methods for an effect, don't choose the easiest, but the one that will have the greatest impact on the audience. If a gimmicked card is required, get one—but if you must do a pass, learn it. The old exhortation that only the effect matters, not the method, shouldn't serve as an excuse to choose the easiest method. If the best method isn't used, the effect suffers; and the best method is not always the easiest.

The choice of repertoire for a program is very important, more so than even some experienced performers believe it to be. Every insubstantial trick used weakens all the others, whereas every strong trick enhances the rest.

If you have to choose five tricks, ask yourself what the five best card tricks are. Forget everything else and add only these five tricks to your repertoire.

#### *Various Effect Categories*

The routines and tricks in a program must belong to different categories of effects. Therefore, it's important that we clarify what these categories are.

*Appearance, disappearance, transformation, transposition, penetration, location, destruction and restoration, telepathy, clairvoyance, precognition, telekinesis*—virtually all effects are variations of these themes.

A good routine is already a combination of several of these effects. For example, "The Ambitious Card" routine in this book incorporates the first five effects listed above.

Each category of effect should only be represented once on a program, unless each repetition of effect represents a significantly more impressive demonstration.

#### *The Program Structure*

Next we will discuss the structure of a classical program from a theoretical perspective. At the end of each element you will find concrete examples using tricks from this course.

**THE OPENING.** The function of the opening is to focus attention, introduce yourself and break the ice. This can be done verbally, but is best accomplished in conjunction with a visual trick, one with a simple structure. It is useful to introduce some well-thought-out humor here, as laughter is the fastest way to dissipate any initial tension. The opening can be a gag lasting ten to twenty seconds, or it can be a short, complete trick.

Suitable tricks are: "The Spectator Cuts the Aces" (*Volume 1*, page 51), "Aces Off the Cuff" (page 265), "The Magic Phone Number" (*Volume 1*, page 191) and "Metamorphosis" (*Volume 1*, page 239).

**THE INTRODUCTION.** Here you establish your personality and performing style. You consolidate your relationship with the audience. A good trick with some light spectator



involvement, such as having someone say *stop* or choose a number, is ideal here, but it shouldn't be a fully participatory exercise. This allows you to gauge individuals' reactions and their communication skills.

Suitable effects include: "The Lie Detector" (*Volume 1*, page 91), "Rise and Swap" (*Volume 1*, page 132), "Subconscious Poker" (page 262), "The Really Wild Nine-card Trick" (page 321) and "Your Number—Your Card" (*Volume 1*, page 147).

THE MIDDLE (EARLY). Now the audience is on your side and you can really get started. One or two especially strong tricks or routines, which may have a complex structure, are suitable. Audience participation is very important here.

Suitable tricks include: "A Phenomenal Memory" (*Volume 1*, page 145), "The Lucky Card" (*Volume 1*, page 164), "The Coué Test" (*Volume 1*, page 125), "Card Through Handkerchief" (page 305) and "The Lucky Coin" (*Volume 1*, page 241).

THE MIDDLE (LATE). Here tricks with a mental or occult presentation work well. Such effects are both baffling and mysterious.

Suitable effects are: "Headliner!" (*Volume 1*, page 228), "The Magus Card" (*Volume 1*, page 162) and "Triple Coincidence" (*Volume 1*, page 99).

FINALE. The concluding trick must be the most impressive in the program. It can be somewhat longer, but must have a clear, simple structure. Strong effects with active audience participation and many possible audience reaction-points are ideal. This is the climax to your program, in which you exert all your abilities to make your appearance memorable.

Suitable tricks are: "Homing Card Plus" (page 288), "Royal Acrobats" (page 324) and "Transposition Extraordinary" (page 350).

Like a classical play, this program consists of five parts. This is a tried and true recipe, allowing for the greatest possible range of variety. If you have a large enough repertoire and like to improvise, you can determine what tricks you will use during the actual course of the performance, following this structure to guide your choices.

While there is no hard and fast rule, I believe it better for beginners to choose the tricks in their program in advance. This not only gives increased confidence in performance, but allows for the integration of methods in the various tricks—which often requires some thought and preparation.

### *New Tricks in the Program*

How often should the tricks in a program be changed—or should you always perform the same tricks? The American master, Al Goshman, liked to say, "*Professionals always perform the same tricks for an ever-changing audience, while amateurs must constantly change tricks for the same the audience.*" Ninety-five percent of the readers of these books are amateurs in precisely this position. Here's a solution to this dilemma:

FIXED TRICKS. Stick to certain tricks or an entire program for several years. This allows you to perfect those tricks over time, gradually mastering the material completely. The experience and understanding gained in the repeated performance of these tricks, along with growing technical and communicative skills, will enhance those effects that you eventually wish to add to your repertoire.



**CHOOSING PERFORMANCES.** Once your friends and acquaintances know that you are a magician, they may call on you to perform when they get together. This would require that you always have something new to show them. The first two or three times, you may wish to honor their request. However, take care not to become the group's "court jester". This would be degrading both to you and to the art of magic. Choose your performances. Slydini advised, "A good general chooses his battleground," and Nate Leipzig admonished, "Don't ever perform unless coaxed," to assure that the group earnestly wants to see something. It is better sometimes not to perform at all; then later, possibly, you can give a half-hour program, perhaps one that is specially announced and by invitation only. This is much better than doing "something new" each time you are asked. The audience will grant you and your art more admiration and respect.

**AVALANCHE INVITATIONS.** Find a new audience for yourself. All you need do is invite seven or eight friends for a drink, with the promise of some magic afterward. This can be cocktails after work or after an evening meal. After such a casual performance, ask your friends at the gathering to arrange such an evening at their homes with their friends as the guests. I recommend that you pick a firm date to set an avalanche of this sort in motion. This method has been used successfully by the magicians of the *Escuela Magica de Madrid* to secure performances over the course of each year, during which they experiment with and study new tricks.

In general, it is better to try to find new audiences for the same tricks than to look for new tricks for the same audience.

### *In Conclusion*

An examination of the principles underlying the construction of a sturdy trick or routine is extremely useful. When you begin to put together a routine or even an extended program, the theoretical and practical insights we have discussed here will smooth your path to success. And should you ever desire to create new tricks, these principles can guide you in inventing good ones; and even more, they will help you to distinguish a well-constructed trick from a poor one.

### *Recommended Reading*

Carrol, José, *Fifty-two Lovers* (Editorial Frakson: Madrid; 1988). Some complex and carefully constructed routines—a truly excellent book by an inspired author.

Devant, David and Nevil Maskelyne, *Our Magic* (Fleming Book Co.: York, PA; 1911). This classic text, already cited in the previous section, is vital reading, as it presents important thoughts on virtually every theoretical aspect of magic.

Kaplan, George, *The Fine Art of Magic* (Fleming Book Co.: York, PA; 1948). This book is a treasure-trove of nearly perfectly constructed tricks and routines (many which are reputed to have been imparted to the author by S. Leo Horowitz). It is one of the best magic books ever written—one more reason to seek it out.

Lavand, René, *Magic from the Soul* (Magic Words: Pasadena; 1993). Every trick in this book is beautifully constructed and serves as a lesson for all subjects addressed in this chapter on theory.



Nelms, Henning, *Magic and Showmanship* (Dover: New York; 1969, ISBN 0-486-22337-X). Another seminal book, already cited, which you simply must read if you strive for a professional performance.

Starke, George *et alia*, editors, *Stars of Magic* (Robbins: Brooklyn; 1961). Routines by the American masters of the 30s, 40s and 50s. All the contributions are worth reading, but especially those by Dai Vernon.

Tamariz, Juan, *Sonata* (Editorial Frakson: Madrid; 1991). In this book you will find many of the routines of one of the greatest close-up magicians of modern times.

Truffaut, François, *Hitchcock* (Simon and Schuster, Inc.: New York; 1984, ISBN 0-671-60429-5). A comprehensive interview with the master of suspense by a competent film professional. The saying that movie making is magic is valid not only for trick photography and special effects, but even more importantly for the psychological manipulation of the viewers. That Hitchcock was an unsurpassed master at this is indisputable. Here he talks about the secret of producing emotions—a secret that should be of greater value to magicians than all others.



# Directing Attention

The Dutch master Fred Kaps used to say in his lectures, "*Misdirect all the time.*" The term *misdirection* has become a magical catch-phrase and is so widespread that it is used in almost all languages.

In contrast to other performing arts, in which something is generally pointed out, in magic one generally points the audience's attention away from something in order to conceal it. In a good detective movie, principles of perception are used constantly to conceal things from the audience. This is done using the techniques of attention direction, because when your attention is drawn to Point A, it is no longer at Point B. So misdirection is really a special case of direction. In this section we will discuss how attention is directed, which conforms more closely to the meaning Fred Kaps intended in his famous but often misunderstood advice.

## *The Means of Perception*

The way in which we perceive and in which our perceptions affect our conscious thought follow certain well-formulated rules that apply, with few exceptions, to all of us.

### *We Perceive Constantly*

Try to sit down and think of nothing. Quite impossible, I think you will agree. As long as we are awake and have our eyes open, if we look at something, the laws of attention are always at work. For example, it's impossible to look at a poster with writing on it without reading it—even if the writing says, "*Don't read this.*" And when we close our eyes, we continue to think (as long as we don't fall asleep). Assuming your audience is awake during your performance, its members will always be seeing things and thinking about what they see. If they aren't thinking what you want them to think, then they're thinking something else—possibly something you don't wish them to think about. So it is your foremost responsibility to know what the conscious thoughts of your spectators are concerned with and to guide their attention constantly.

### *Individual Conviction*

The spectators must each be convinced by everything they see and hear, or they will not believe. Saint-Exupery, a magician in his own way, stated this quite succinctly: "*We do not discover truth, we create it.*" So whenever possible, let the spectators draw their own conclusions. Don't say, "*Now I'll thoroughly shuffle the cards.*" This may actually arouse suspicions by its very emphasis. Instead say, "*I'll shuffle like they do in Las Vegas.*" This conveys the same meaning, but shifts the emphasis so as not to invite suspicion.

Use statements that implicitly contain additional information. Don't say, "*I'll place the four Aces face down, here on the table.*" This may call the procedure into question by raising doubts. Instead say, "*I'll place three cards on one of these four Aces—point to any one of them.*" The fact that the four Aces are on the table is assumed—being a prerequisite if the spectator is to choose one.

If you aren't sure that the spectator will draw the proper conclusions independently, help the process along with a gag, a witticism or a comic interlude, but don't be explicit. Instead of saying, "*This is an ordinary handkerchief,*" say something like "*Please make sure that*



*this handkerchief contains no trapdoors, microchips or hidden assistants,* "if it fits your style. If a more serious approach better suits you, you could say, "A handkerchief of the purest silk. Would you confirm that?" In examining the material, the spectator implicitly verifies that the handkerchief is normal. To remind the audience of this, you can later say, "And all this with a handkerchief examined by our silk expert," indicating your helper.

### *Prejudices and Expectations*

The apparatus of human perception is always trying to extend its conclusions beyond the limited range of information it actually receives. As we walk along a sidewalk, when we hear the squealing of tires, many thoughts and reactions take place in an instant. All of them are set in motion merely by the sound of squealing tires, but we draw on a lifetime of experience to place those sounds in a larger context. This is an ancient mechanism and no doubt it is largely responsible for our species having survived to date.

That people constantly elaborate on partial information, that they are constantly trying to fit things into a larger context, is what makes it possible for us to mislead them. When you set a squared deck face down on the table, the spectators will make at least a dozen assumptions about things they don't see. They assume that the deck is complete, that all the cards have backs that match the top card, that all the faces are different, that the deck fits into the card case, that the card case is empty (since the deck is on the table), that the table is solid, and so on. As you know, none of these assumptions is necessarily true.

In this regard, magic should be very easy, since our spectators fool themselves. All you need do is avoid any words, thoughts or actions that interrupt this tendency. While it seems simple, it certainly isn't easy, as the American thinker and essayist Eugene Burger will assure you.

### *Peripheral Perceptions*

Leibniz knew it nearly three hundred years ago, when he wrote, "It is a great mistake to assume that the human intellect only perceives what the senses consciously capture." It is therefore a huge and negligent omission to pay attention only to those things you believe spectators will notice. Everything comes to us through our senses, but our intellect makes much more of what the senses give it. Let's take a look at just a few of the scientific theories that deal with this topic, those having practical applications for directing attention.

PRETENSIONS TO POWER. The famous Austrian psychiatrist Alfred Adler claimed that our thinking and actions are guided by our pretensions to power. We can take advantage of this by introducing tricks that demonstrate the spectators' powers, rather than just our own. "Seventh Son of a Seventh Son" (Volume 1, page 101), "The Spectator Cuts the Aces" (Volume 1, page 51) and "The Magus Card" (Volume 1, page 162) are all examples of tricks in which a spectator succeeds by demonstrating magical powers. This will fascinate the spectator, who in turn will reward you with undivided attention.

THE REFERENCE GROUP. U.S. sociologist David Riesman stated that within a body of people with a specialized interest, there will be a shared group of persons and concepts specific to that interest, a "reference group", which provides the main source of meaning for the members of that body. For instance, given a group of architects, their reference group would include the names of recognized architects, famous structures and the terms of architecture. Therefore, if you are performing for academics, you might talk about an experiment originally designed by Dr. Charles Honorton of Princeton's Psychophysical



Research Laboratories to investigate paranormal phenomenon as you present "Triple Coincidence" (*Volume 1*, page 99). "The Coué Test" (*Volume 1*, page 125) as described would also be appropriate for such an audience, since its presentation contains elements that fall within the spectators' reference group. An academic audience will feel a kinship to these researchers and, if your references are intelligently chosen, their use can elevate your audience's opinion of your performance and create greater interest in it.

**SYMBOLISM.** Scientific discoveries of all kinds are used in advertising, including having psychoanalysts analyze the deep-rooted meaning a product might have for consumers. What is true for advertisers is also valid for magicians: We must recognize the symbolism embodied in a trick (see the discussion of "Entertainment" on page 410). You can use even the simplest discoveries, such as those given in the section "A Brief History of Playing Cards" (*Volume 1*, page 5). For example, force a heart rather than a club, since the inherent symbolism will have greater affinity and meaning for most spectators.

**SUBLIMINAL INFORMATION.** There are stimuli that our senses register but that we do not consciously recognize at the time. Nonetheless, they influence our behavior and the formation of our opinions. Remember how in the false swing cut (*Volume 1*, page 58) or in the double cut (*Volume 1*, page 95) the deck is allowed to remain unsquared for several seconds after the cut is completed, and only then is it squared up. The squaring subliminally reinforces the idea that the cards have been cut. Also consider Dai Vernon's cold-deck cut (page 389), in the final phase of which your right thumb holds a break between the halves. You move the deck forward on the table and only then deliver the last cut, suggesting that the cards have been normally squared before the cut is made. In nearly all of the techniques in this book you will find examples of subtle subliminal suggestions.

I am reminded here of the theory of the degree of freedom in choosing a card so brilliantly formulated by the Swiss-American magician Ravelli (Dr. Ronald Wohl). It states that you must have a card chosen in the same manner in which it is to be replaced in the deck. How would you feel if you were allowed to choose a card from a ribbon spread on the table, but were then required to return your selection while the performer holds the deck, cuts it and tells you to place your card onto the bottom half? Something is not right. A spectator would probably not register this imbalance consciously, but would sense that something was amiss. Initially, there was complete freedom in choosing a card, yet that freedom is withdrawn when the card must be replaced. Always choose the method of having a card selected that is congruent with the manner in which it will later be controlled. An elegant example of a solution to such a problem is the key-card-in-a-ribbon-spread control (*Volume 1*, page 138).

The above shows once more how important it is to pay attention to details that the spectator does not consciously perceive. If you wish to become a good magician, whether amateur or professional, then don't listen to the hoard of tricksters who will tell you, "*But the spectators don't notice that—they only want to be entertained.*" Which is precisely why you do it.

### *The Physical Direction of Attention*

This is the "misdirection" understood by laymen. For them, this is the essence of magic's psychology. You already know that it is an important element, but it is not the *most* important, in manipulating the audience's perceptions. Physical direction of attention is worked



mostly on the spectators' gaze. It is therefore important to recognize the categories of stimuli that direct the eyes.

### *The Direction of the Gaze*

There's a wonderful story about the respected Scottish magician, John Ramsay, in which he explains to a young man how to make a coin disappear. A few days later, the young man proudly seeks out Ramsay to show him his progress. As the eager student reaches into his pocket to bring out the coin, Ramsay interrupts him, saying, "Completely wrong!"

Directing attention with the gaze is only effective if the audience has been conditioned to follow your gaze. It's useless to look somewhere, assuming that your spectators will do likewise, unless you have conditioned them to do so. You must establish eye contact with them in the first few seconds of performance, and constantly renew that contact to maintain it. Tamariz says, "String imaginary threads from your eyes to the spectators. . . . Keep the threads stretched during the performance."<sup>20</sup> Condition your spectators to look you in the eye when you speak, by your looking at them, one at a time from left to right. Also condition them to look where you look. Again, you must do this from the outset, perhaps even beginning informally before the performance, first attempting it, then checking it and correcting it. Within a few minutes this form of communication will be established. Then the spectators will always look at you when you speak and look where you look.

This is why the canny Johnny Ramsay criticized his pupil, before the fellow thought he had even begun: He had forgotten to look at the spectators before taking out the coin. Instead, he looked at his own pocket, where the coin resided. How could he hope to direct the spectators' gaze later when he had not yet made eye contact?

### *Movement*

Movement is particularly effective when it springs not from a prior motion but from a state of rest, with which it contrasts. If you hold your hand still for a few seconds, then make a gesture, it will attract much more attention than the same gesture will when part of a set of motions. This leads to the same rule expressed earlier, that you must make no unmotivated movements. A good example of how the gaze can be coordinated with movement is given in the second check point for the double turnover (page 334).

### *Touch*

Touching a spectator is primarily a means of communication and therefore a part of the presentation. However, it can also have a decisive influence on the spectators' attention. If, for example, you gently touch the spectator's arm before turning a card face up at the climax, saying, "In a loud clear voice, what was the name of your card?" you can be sure that spectator will give you complete attention, which in turn carries that of the rest of the audience. A tasteful, discreet touch creates a bond, which in this case also prevents the spectator from refusing to name the card (a problem we will return to on page 471).

### *Contrast*

Anything that contrasts with its surroundings draws attention to itself. Examples: a match being lit; gaudy clothing; a sudden, unexpected gesture. This characteristic of contrast has advantages and disadvantages.

As a consequence of this consideration, all other factors being equal, the card conjurer should change a blue deck into a red one, because the contrast is brighter and therefore



more effective than going from red to blue. Another instance: Work with a red deck when performing on a black, blue or green surface, but a blue deck when the surface is red.

### *Pointing*

Pointing is surely the most direct way of physically directing attention. But the strategy of pointing goes far beyond the simple use of a finger or the head. Review the remarks on this in our discussion of "Body Language" (page 412).

### *Visual Attractions*

So far I haven't said anything in this course regarding apparel. Having seen the sensational Fred Kaps in tails and the brilliant Juan Tamariz in jeans, I can't believe that a certain style of clothing is critical to one's success. Regardless of what you wear, though, your clothes will visually attract a certain amount of attention. Ask yourself if you really want to wear a bright yellow tie with a blood-red shirt. Can your personality and your tricks compete with the strong optical attraction of your clothing or will the spectators be distracted by them? The mad French genius Gaetan Bloom can do this—but can you?

### *Mental Direction of Attention*

Imagine that you are watching a film and it just happens to be the famous shower scene from Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece *Psycho*, in which Anthony Perkins murders Janet Leigh (all right, Janet Leigh's double). Although you see nothing overtly violent, such as the knife piercing the body or blood gushing, and although you know that the blood you do see is nothing more than tomato juice and that everything has been rehearsed and that these are just actors in a film, the scene is still utterly shocking and brutal. Throughout its forty-five seconds and seventy camera positions, the scene makes your skin crawl. This is a perfect—and I do mean perfect—mental direction of attention. You, as the spectator, are driven to extrapolate and imagine the entire horrifying crime on the basis of just a few images. Your senses and attention have been masterfully directed, to the point that you would swear you had just seen flowing red blood—in a black-and-white film!

Let's examine the primary factors with which a magician can mentally direct (and misdirect).

### *Sources of Information*

In principle, a trick consists of a sequence of phases that must be clearly communicated to the spectators. The trick "A Phenomenal Memory" (*Volume 1*, page 145) consists of the following phases:

1. A card is chosen (or, preferably, is forced).
2. The card is replaced (next to a key card if the force has failed).
3. The cards are shuffled (by a spectator, if the force worked).
4. The deck is ribbon spread face up on the table and the order "noted" by the performer.
5. The spectator displaces the chosen card.
6. The card is located, seemingly from its displacement.

Each phase consists of discrete sources of information that impart to the spectators ideas critical for a proper appreciation of the effect. In the first phase these sources are the deck, the spectator and the chosen card, in that order. At any given time, there should be only



one source of information acting on the spectators' perceptions. More than one source at a time creates confusion and makes it easy for them to overlook or forget critical information. For this reason, you should not speak while the spectator is showing everyone the card. And when the card is replaced and the deck shuffled, the spectator and deck should be the only sources of information—at that moment you must remain in the background. Otherwise the spectators might be uncertain, both then and in their subsequent reconstruction of events, whether you knew neither the card nor its position in the deck.

The source of information is always visual in nature. This is true even when you are verbally communicating information, for the spectators will look at your mouth. For this reason, you should generally not turn your face away from the audience or cover your mouth when speaking.

Having divided a trick into its various phases and then identified the relevant sources of information, an expert will control the attention so well that it shifts smoothly from one source to the next. In a well-constructed trick, each phase leads naturally to the next. Distractions, discrepancies and negative insertions (page 427) must be avoided at all costs.

### *The Center of Attention*

THE CENTER OF ATTENTION SHOULD BE THE SOURCE OF INFORMATION. We would like our spectators to pay attention to the intended source of information. However, each spectator will pay attention to the center of his or her interest. In a well-constructed and -presented trick both the source of information and the center of interest will overlap.

In the "Presentation" section we discussed what interests spectators (page 420). Every source of information must be framed to make it interesting to the audience.

THE TWENTY-SECOND RULE. The ability to pay attention is not a constant, straight line, but more like a wave with crests and troughs. Tests have shown that the attention span of the average spectator wanes slightly after about twenty seconds. It then rebounds, wanes again and so on for roughly twenty minutes. After that, fatigue starts to become a factor. This is important knowledge when constructing a trick, and when determining how to ration the information needed to misdirect the spectators. The center of attention must shift within twenty seconds, if no new information is introduced to capture the spectators' attention.

### *The Performer's Attention*

What the magician pays attention to during the performance will arouse the interest of the audience. You must always devote your attention to the center of interest. Otherwise, you can't expect your spectators to do so. Your silent script (page 416) and the direction of your gaze (discussed above) are important elements for focusing your attention.

### *False Contexts*

The logic of our thought processes always builds on a basis of context. For example, if in "A Phenomenal Memory" (Volume 1, page 145) your audience is convinced that you found the card through some mnemonic ability, you have succeeded in creating a false context, making it impossible for them to stumble on the true secret of the trick. It's possible to create such false contexts for any audience, including an audience of magicians. In fact, it is particularly easy to create such contexts for magicians. If you perform a few technically challenging tricks, your colleagues will immediately classify you as a card technician. This will cause them to be all the more astonished when you later find a card that you had no possibility of controlling. In this context, they would never suspect your use of marked



cards or a key card, although intelligent laypeople, being ignorant of the sleight-of-hand techniques recognized by your colleagues, see the trick in a very different context, and might have thought of the solution immediately. Isn't magic fascinating!

### *False Assumptions*

Let's assume you are performing a trick that uses a stooge. Wouldn't it be clever to cast the stooge in the role of a heckler! Because the rest of the audience would immediately identify him as a somewhat unpleasant spectator who is openly antagonistic to you, they would never suspect his true role, unless he overacts. A pre-arranged deck will be identified as a shuffled one if your stooge does the shuffling, for who would suspect that he false shuffles it.

The strategy of false ordering is another example, among many, of deliberately contrived false assumption. Let's examine Annemann's strategy for forcing one of three objects (commonly called the conjurer's choice), to which we add some fine points contributed by a master of devious psychology, Phil Goldstein. Three cards lay face down on the table. You want to force the center one using instructions that seem straightforward, but are in fact open to ambiguous interpretation. You say, *"We only need one of these three cards, so two must be eliminated."* You have already set up two paths: choosing and eliminating.

*"Reach out with your left hand and pick up one of the cards..."* If the middle card is chosen, fine. You continue, *"You have chosen one card? Fine. So we eliminate the other two."*

However, if the spectator picks one of the other two cards, immediately continue with your interrupted instructions, as though this had been your intention all along: *"...and with your right hand pick up a second card."* If the other indifferent card is chosen, that is as useful as having the force card immediately selected. You continue, *"Are you sure? Fine. I said we only needed one card, so we eliminate the other two. Set them aside. We'll work with the card you've chosen to leave."*

But what do you do when the second card taken is the force card. Say, *"Are you certain? You can still change your mind."* If the spectator does change, so much the better. The situation immediately becomes one of the two scenarios just described, and you proceed accordingly. If, however, no change is made, or the indifferent card is simply exchanged for the other indifferent card, you say, *"Fine. You've eliminated this one."* You push the card remaining on the table aside. *"Now hand me just one card."* As you say this, push the indifferent card on the table off to one side. If the force card is given to you, say, *"Good. This is the one card we'll use then. Set that one aside. We only need the one you chose and handed to me."*

Finally, should you be handed an indifferent card, set it on the table with the other one, without looking at it, and continue, *"That's two cards you've eliminated. Hold up the card you've chosen, so that everyone can see it."* As you can clearly see from this example, the spectators will identify each step in the manner you suggest, provided, of course, that you react instantly and naturally, so that everything seems transparent, as if you had never thought of doing anything else. And you really hadn't, had you?

### *Premature Conclusions*

A perfect example of a premature conclusion is the first phase of "Homing Card Plus" (page 290), in which you show that a card has traveled to your pocket. Because the pocket was previously shown empty and a card is now in it, the spectators falsely conclude that it must



be the selection, as you suggest by your presentation. This causes their attention to wane momentarily, giving you the opportunity to palm the chosen card, then remove it from your pocket. In a well-constructed trick, the audience is constantly reaching premature conclusions—the fact that they are false conclusions is formulated to your advantage.

### *The Strategy of Posing Questions*

Everyone pays more attention to a question than to a statement. Questions command attention. Sentence structure and intonation already signal the spectators with whom you are speaking that more is expected from them than passive listening; an answer from them is necessary. Even those questions that we may not look forward to answering can't be ignored (*"How much do you earn?" "How much rent do you pay?"*). This almost reflex-like call to attention can be applied in countless performing situations.

The strategy of posing questions is also a powerful presentational principle. Questions can be used to convince the audience (*"Did you search the pocket thoroughly? Is it absolutely empty? No one inside?"*), to communicate ideas (*"Do you agree when I say that you have shuffled the cards randomly, in a mathematical sense?"*) and to create greater clarity (*"Is there anything in my hand other than this card?"*).

Questions can also come to the rescue in awkward situations, weakening suspicions or reformulating hostile remarks, so that they are less damaging.

The power of a question rests in the fact that, as soon as it has been posed, it must be given the spectator's undivided attention. For that very reason, one of the primary ways of misdirecting attention at the moment a sleight must be executed is to pose a question while looking either directly at a spectator or at a segment of the audience from left to right. After a card has been replaced in the deck and you are holding a break, ask, *"You chose a red card, didn't you?"* The spectator will look at you with astonishment. Either because your answer is false (in which case you immediately say, *"Then it must have been black."*) or because the card really was red. At the very moment of their response you execute the pass, or shuffle the card to the top or bottom. Of course, to be effective, the question must relate directly to the situation at hand, otherwise even an uncritical spectator will recognize it as an obvious ploy designed to misdirect attention.

### *Naturalness and Handling*

A casual, relaxed handling influences our perceptions by not arousing our suspicions. In principle, perception is the adjustment of available information to conform to our expectations and biases. Perception is always an active process, conditioned by our expectations and adjusted to circumstances. We only take note when we are looking for something, and we look when our attention is aroused by an imbalance, a discrepancy between our expectations and incoming perceptions. We can't be cognizant of everything in a room, but we notice when something has been changed. We can't note every detail in a series of actions, and when the less interesting details seem in agreement with our expectations, they fall through a crack in our perception machinery.

### *The Theory of False Solutions*

Misdirection and memory are responsible for a trick being deceptive, and for a spectator, even after hours of reflection and intensive discussion with others, being left with no explanation other than that you really can perform magic. How can you achieve this most desirable situation?



Write down all the possible explanations you think the spectators could possibly come up with. Then consider how you might, in the course of your performance, inhibit the spectator from reaching such conclusions. Juan Tamariz has thoroughly investigated and formulated this presentational strategy.<sup>40</sup> If you are able to get your spectators to eliminate all solutions that may occur to them, you will have given them an experience of the miraculous and evoked a childlike sense of wonder.

Explanations that plague card conjurors from the outset of a performance are marked cards and stooges. The professional Canadian card expert Martin A. Nash is said to have once displayed \$10,000 in a visible glass casket, guarded by two policemen. Anyone who could prove that Nash used trick cards or stooges would be given the money. One need not go to such theatrical extremes. However, you must face and surmount the problem of eliminating these common explanations within the context of your routines, if you wish to create a sensation with your magic.

### *Reading Your Spectators*

The spectators may not tell you directly how interesting they find your performance, or voice the level of their attention at any given moment, but they continuously send out subconscious signals. What do these signals look like, how can you interpret them properly and how should you react to them?

#### *It's the Eye*

An old saying maintains that "the eyes are the mirror of the soul". The eyes are, in fact, extremely expressive. You can read almost everything in them. You don't need a scientific background to do this; a bit of experience, coupled with a certain sensibility and a healthy understanding of human nature is all that is necessary to recognize if a spectator is paying attention. Let's consider some elements that are relevant to our work as communicators and artistic deceivers.

On whatever other planes communication between you and your spectators may happen, it will always occur through eye contact as well. Looking into their eyes as you converse with them gives your spectators the feeling that you care about them. When talking to them try to look softly between their eyes, and look at their moving lips when they talk to you. This makes them feel comfortable.

But eyes don't only transport information from outside into the brain—they also tell the outer world what is happening inside. Think of the profound messages the eyes of two lovers tell each other. The eyes monitor the current thinking process of the spectators. Here are some criteria I've found helpful in reading the dispositions of spectators.

When a spectator is looking into your eyes you can be sure that you have his attention. Very often the intensity of his gaze tells you something about his attitude toward you. A hard look in many cases expresses a high degree of skepticism, while a soft look mirrors the fact that a spectator likes you. Therefore, if you receive a hard gaze it might behoove you to spend a little more time creating a better rapport; or win them over with a quick, powerful trick that establishes your competence, before proceeding to the presentation of a longer piece.

Look a spectator in the eyes and ask him to think of a card. Most people will change eye position or their intensity of expression. This means that the spectator is switching modes



of thinking as he tries to visualize a card in his mind. When he's got the card he will very often look back into your eyes, again switching his thinking mode. It isn't necessary to make this into a science. The important insight here is that, when you see a spectator change the position of his eyes, you can safely deduce that he's starting a new thought or that he's thinking differently about the current situation. By remaining sensitive to this aspect of communication you can know if you still have the spectator's attention, or if something you've just said doesn't convince him. Since everything happens in the context you're creating, it will be relatively safe and easy to read the spectator. You can then choose to spend a little more time on a certain aspect of your presentation, or decide to move on in your script. This not only makes for far better communication but is a decisive step toward fooling all of the people all of the time.

Frequent eye contact with each spectator and general observation of others' eyes will soon give you to an understanding of their important messages. This is particularly easy in performances of close-up magic, around a table or in an intimate gathering.

### *Body Language*

Spectators' body language will tell you almost as much as their eyes. First take note of any physical barriers the spectators may erect between you and themselves, such as withdrawn arms or crossed legs that shut you out. You must remove the feelings of defense these postures betray as soon as possible. Fortunately, this is fairly easy at a table-top performance. First, use very open body language yourself. As the spectators begin to empathize with you, they will unconsciously adopt your body language and relax, for people who empathize with one another tend to assume similar postures. You can use this principle when addressing an individual: When possible, mirror his or her body signals with your own. This reduces communication barriers. You can force withdrawn individuals to open up physically and then mentally by asking them to shuffle the deck or hold a card in each hand (spreading the arms apart), or by handing them the deck, so that they can offer it to someone else for the selection of a card. This opens them up not only toward you but toward the rest of the audience as well. With particularly difficult spectators you may need to pay somewhat more attention in deference to their need for greater recognition and respect. For example: *"Please hold the card firmly with both hands. I think that for this experiment you are exactly the right person. It may not seem so to you at the moment, because you're so skeptical. But I can assure you that skeptics are ultimately the best spectators."* As you say the last sentence, gently touch the spectator's forearm for about three seconds and smile.

Take a moment now to think about strategies that would work for you—no one can do that as well as you can.

### *Distance*

The space people maintain between each other when communicating is in part determined by one's culture—it seems to increase as one travels from South to North. If you are standing, controlling this distance is practically the only way you have of defining a private domain while interacting with someone. The closer your relationship, the smaller the distance. At the table this domain is defined by the physical space taken up by your chair, the armrests and your possessions on the table (drinking glasses, pen, cigarette pack and so on). The spectators' body language tells you whether or not they are comfortable with this domain as you have defined it. (Are they leaning forward or back?) Always try to reduce



the distance comfortably, as described in the previous paragraph, by getting the spectators involved in the performance.

### *Verbal Expressions*

When performing magic close up at a table, your interactions with spectators are more active and less formal than they would be in a parlor or stage setting. From time to time, the spectators will—one hopes—react to the performance by saying something. In addition to the eyes, body language and positional distance, a spectator's tone will reveal what is behind the words—Piaget refers to communications on the "metalevel". Always try to understand why a spectator says something. For instance, assume someone asks, "Is that a poker or a bridge deck?" What this seemingly innocent question may really express is the thought that your cards are specially prepared (the solution to this problem will be discussed later under the title "Can You do That with My Deck?" (page 473). Or how about "That's a very wide jacket you have on." This expresses the thought that the magic is attributable to the properties of your clothing: secret pockets and wide sleeves used to make things disappear. I usually counter this with "You're right—it's an Italian jacket by *Momento Due* (a well-known designer) and they do cut them wide. You probably prefer *Boss* with its more classic cut." If appropriate, you could take your jacket off for the next effect, but be careful: If the situation is not handled properly, this could look like a confrontation.

The spectators' signals are your feedback, reactions to what you say and do. You must learn to listen to them. Develop your understanding of them by reading technical literature on communication, and increase your sensitivity through careful observation during your performances. Only then can you consistently hold and control an audience's attention.

### *Summary*

It is important always to (mis)direct and never to confuse. Misdirection is justified, interesting and relevant to the theme, whereas confusion distracts from the theme, is unnatural, destroys the construction and the illusion, and is painfully obvious.

If you are able to control the spectators' attention constantly, you're an indisputable showman, for you've succeeded in doing something that interested your audience. It doesn't matter if your style is comic, mysterious or genial. In the broadest sense of the term, you have entertained your audience with something stimulating and intelligent.

Do what Fred Kaps advised: "Misdirect all the time."

### *Recommended Reading*

Bandler, Richard and John Grinder, *Frogs into Princes* (Real People Press: Moab; 1979, ISBN 0-911226-19-2). The founders of Neurolinguistic Programming (NLP) talk about a very practical applied form of therapy.

Brown, J. A. C., *Techniques of Persuasion* (London, 1964). Examples of techniques used in political propaganda, advertising and everyday life. Several chapters have direct relevance to magic.

Fisher, Roger and William Ury, *Getting to Yes: The Harvard Concept*. Methods and strategies that can influence interactions in business, politics, profession and everyday life to your advantage.



- Fitzkee, Daniel, *Magic by Misdirection* (Lee Jacobs: Pomeroy, OH; 1987). One of the three greatest works on directing attention. The other two? Maskelyne and Devant's *Our Magic* and Nelms's *Magic and Showmanship*.
- Galloway, Andrew, *Diverting Card Magic* (Galloway: Ayr, 1980). Galloway was one of the most talented students of John Ramsay. Here he describes in direct, clear language Ramsay's theories in the context of very effective routines. I consider this a truly worthwhile volume.
- Gelb, Michael J., *Present Yourself: Captivate Your Audience with Great Presentation Skills* (Jalmar Press: Torrance; 1988, ISBN 0-915190-51-6). If you read just one book on the subject, make it this one.
- Gombrich, E. H., *Art and Illusion* (Pantheon Books: New York; 1960). A book on the perceptions of artists and observers. Most chapters could have been written directly for magic. Numerous examples and illustrations. Really excellent!
- Nelms, Henning, *Magic and Showmanship* (Dover: New York; 1969, ISBN 0-486-22337-X). For this section, the pages following 178 are particularly relevant. I will recommend this book in this theoretical chapter again and again—until you buy it and read it!
- Slydini, Tony, all books about this great artist are recommended. He was regarded as the "Master of Misdirection" during his lifetime.
- Tamariz, Juan, *The Magic Way* (Editorial Frakson: Madrid; 1987). A book as unique as its author.
- Taylor, David A., *Mind* (Simon and Schuster: New York; 1982). An easily understood overview on the thinking dynamics of humans. Good chapters on attention, memory, etc.
- Truffaut, François, *Hitchcock* (Simon and Schuster, Inc.: New York; 1984, ISBN 0-671-60429-5). I can think of no good reason you should not buy and read this book—today if possible! You cannot afford to spend the rest of your life without it.
- Watzlawick, Paul, *Change: Principles of Problem Formation and Problem Resolution* (W. W. Norton and Co., Inc.: New York; 1974, ISBN 0-393-01104-6). The books by Watzlawick are insightful reading for magicians. Also check out his collection of essays on constructionism.



# Technique, Handling and Management

Craft is a branch of science. It creates and defines the tools and refined motor skills necessary for the creation of art. This section deals with the craft of card conjuring.

Sleight-of-hand is the secret, manual technique of deception that permits a trick to work. The manner in which the performer breathes life into his technique, giving it rhythm and power through his knowledge, skill and talent, is handling. And finally, management encompasses all considerations having as their goal the effortless and elegant initiation, execution and conclusion of the technique.

Intelligent application of handling and management to technique are largely responsible for the elevation of a magic trick to a work of art. In the following we shall examine the three topics separately, although in practice they flow naturally together.

## Technique

*"I am not only responsible for maintaining my violin playing technique for as long as possible, but I must also take steps to develop it, making it more precise and fluid, so that it is more than equal to the demands that I place on it as a means of expression."*

Yehudi Menuhin<sup>41</sup>

Technique is a prerequisite that makes performance possible. It is the instrument of our interpretive talent. The Chinese have a saying: *"It is not enough to go to the river with the desire to catch fish. You must also bring a net."* Imagine a writer who didn't have sufficient mastery of his language, or a painter with no knowledge of perspective or color theory, or a pianist who wanted to play symphonies, but knew only how to play scales and a few chords. The essence of a trick can only be communicated to an audience through technique. Various aspects of the term technique will be outlined as we continue.

## Understanding the Mechanics

In mechanics we are concerned with the forces and actions at work within the precise physical execution of the sleight. For example, the manner in which the halves of the deck are held and transposed in the pass. There must be no confusion about the mechanics of a sleight. This is why I have adopted the detailed, unified and logical terminology shown on the endpapers of these volumes. That is why I have cautioned the reader to learn this terminology thoroughly. Otherwise, practice and application of the various techniques will be flawed.

## Understanding the Function

A sleight or technique is useless if it has no purpose within the context of a trick. You must always ask yourself the following: What function does this technique serve? Could I achieve that goal more directly or elegantly with another technique? Can the technique be replaced by a psychological or presentational subtlety, or through a gimmicked card or deck? However, before you "simplify" a trick by eliminating a sleight merely because you don't want to spend the time necessary to master it, keep in mind the following saying by Edward Marlo: *"Some time ago, someone said, somewhere, something to the effect that if you had a trick with three sleights, and then eliminated one of the moves, you would have a*



*better trick. Then, if you worked out a method to accomplish the effect with one move, you had a darned good trick. And, if you could do the trick without that last move, you would have a miracle. However, I have found that if you eliminate that last move you usually wind up with a mathematical atrocity."*<sup>22</sup>

### *The Best Technique*

You must know precisely why a specific technique is applied in preference to all others. There are good techniques and there are better ones. You should insist on only the best. The best technique is the one that achieves the effect in the most direct manner, yet appears logical and natural in the context of the presentation. The best technique is not always the most difficult technique, and the technique that may be the best in some cases, may be the worst in others. For instance, assume you are performing an Ambitious Card routine. You decide to insert the signed card genuinely into the center of the deck, take a break above it (the diagonal insertion, *Volume 1*, page 69), then execute the pass (page 297)—invisibly, of course. This is a very direct route for bringing the card to the top, but it is also very difficult; there are only a few experts capable of performing the pass invisibly under these demanding circumstances. If you wish to use the pass, it is better placed in the first phase of the routine, before the spectators know what to expect. A double turnover might be used to replace the pass in the second phase, when everyone is waiting for you to cut the deck somehow to bring the card to the top. A double turnover is comparatively easier and achieves the goal with nearly the same clarity. But you could also show the card on top, retain it there with an injog shuffle (page 44, *Volume 1*), then show it again on top, using the following presentation as justification: *"The card is so ambitious, it always comes to the top. Even when I thoroughly shuffle the cards. It makes no difference—the card always comes back to the top."* In each of these cases, the technique employed (pass, double turnover, false shuffle) is the best, since within the context of the routine it serves to eliminate possible solutions, one by one.

But what is the best method for a particular technique? For example, which of the double lifts or turnovers taught in this course is the best? There is not always a clear answer to this question. However, it is important that you ask it and find an answer based on your own knowledge, ability and experience. As those things change, you may revise your decisions, with the result that your repertoire is constantly maturing in reflection of your growing powers.

### *Active and Passive Techniques*

The great theoretician Arturo de Ascanio divides techniques into two categories based on their appearance. "Active techniques" have an external reality, while "passive techniques" should have no external reality for the audience.

**ACTIVE TECHNIQUES.** Active techniques are carried out in the course of another action. Examples are the injog shuffle (*Volume 1*, page 44), indeed all shuffle controls (pages 43-48 and 253-261) in which an apparent shuffle is employed; the Braue reverse (page 367, in which a card is secretly reversed as the deck is turned over; or the double turnover (*Volume 1*, pages 130, and this volume, page 331), in which a card is openly turned over, but is actually two cards. The critical factor in all these techniques is the existence of an overt handling that covers or disguises a secret operation—during a false shuffle, real shuffling occurs; during a double turnover, cards really are turned over. Active techniques are psychologically less stressful for the performer since the sleight need not be invisible.



**PASSIVE TECHNIQUES.** Passive techniques have no overt external reality. A classic pass, for example, is executed while nothing apparently happens: the hands are at rest. Palming and the top change are similar. Precisely because these techniques are not masked by a direct covering action they present an enormous challenge, and not only for beginners. One consequence is that passive techniques must be executed with much greater precision than other techniques. It is, however, often possible to create a direct cover with an artificial action. Consider, for example, the riffle pass or the various covers for the palm and the top change discussed earlier in this course. An intelligent construction and well-reasoned presentation can also help mask these sleights effectively.

You may have the most fantastic ideas—but you can only express them within the limits of your technical ability. The more techniques you master, the more tools you will have to express the things you want to say.

## *The Handling*

*"The human hand is a miracle of artistic skill, and within each lies the gift of a personal style."*  
Anonymous

Handling designates the manner in which the performer overtly interacts with the props employed, and how he interprets the techniques.

It is only through handling that the performer can carry out the actions of a trick and so express his ideas. Like facial expression, body language or the wardrobe, it is one of those elements that is ever present during the performance, constantly exerting an influence on the audience. The handling exposes the carefree yet certain, light yet sovereign hand of the master. It is an expression of the sensitivity of the performer.

In the following we will attempt to address the elements that can lend your handling brilliance, virtuosity and precision.

## *A Soft Elegance*

A soft elegance refers to the manner in which you grasp and hold the cards. It is an expression of your sense of touch, similar to that observed when an accomplished pianist strokes the keys or a painter applies the brush. It is the knowing touch the artist employs with the object of his art. The following story is told about Arturo de Ascanio: Ascanio is walking past a store in which playing cards are sold. As he comes into view, the cards in the storefront window turn and say to each other, *"Look, there goes our great love."*

Regardless of your performing style—you are still a lover of cards and should express this feeling every time you handle them. Treat your deck like a concert violinist would his Stradivarius. Famous magicians like Brother John Hamman, Arturo de Ascanio, René Lavand, José Carroll and Tony Slydini are noted for their extraordinary sensitivity in handling cards, although each does so with a different style.

What is true for the rhythm found in motion, the color in appearance and the voice in speaking is also true of one's handling: It must vary while staying true to your style. The manner in which you hold the deck or a card can vary from the most sensuous stroke to the tightest grip, provided the handling is arrived at consciously and guided by a love of the object.

## *Dynamic and Aesthetic*

**MOTION, RHYTHM AND TEMPO.** Much of our thinking is done in the form of pictures. These are not primarily still pictures, like snapshots; most are moving, dynamic pictures. That is



why motion so easily captures the attention of the human mind. For motion to have an æsthetic influence on the perceptions, it must be fluid, unhurried, sovereign and elegant. It must not necessarily be tied to a specific rhythm. It can be deliberate or temperamental, and all shades in-between. What is important is that the motions express a personal style that respects the rules of æsthetics just listed. The more attention we pay to this, the more we will succeed in touching the emotions of our audiences. When one considers that as much as eighty percent of human decisions are based on emotion, we simply cannot permit ourselves to overlook this important aspect of communication.

**LIVING OBJECTS.** Through open, fluid and elegant handling the cards can seem to develop a power of their own. You have breathed life into them, thus accomplishing a creative and artistic act. Rather than merely turning a card over at the climax of a trick, occasionally use a flourish to do so. Through an intelligent use of motions in harmony you can awaken the idea of the beautiful in the minds of spectators, and so achieve an artistic goal. This produces a feeling of well-being in the spectators and gives everything you say and do credibility and conviction. It makes the individual tricks more deceptive and raises the magical quality of the entire program.

**ÆSTHETICS AND DECEPTION.** Let's take an example from everyday life: Assume that you are handed someone's written document and given the task of correcting spelling, grammar and style. If the text has been professionally typeset and printed on expensive paper, it is likely that you will find less fault with it than if the same text were handwritten on a napkin. The reason is simple: The printed text appears practically untouchable and radiates authority. You'll reconsider corrections to such a text. In contrast, the carelessly presented handwritten text gives the impression that something must be wrong—it will probably not be long before you find numerous errors.

Therefore, the more artistic your card handling, the more harmonious your management and the more intelligent your construction, the more prestige your performance will command.

**FEAR, THE ENEMY OF COÖRDINATION.** Handling is actually the coördination of small movements into groups of movements, and the combination of these groups into larger units of movement. The one factor that can most undermine good handling is fear; the nervousness that produces moist skin and shaking hands. So we must ask ourselves, What is it that causes this fear and erodes the coördination of our handling? If we can identify the mechanism and penetrate it, we may be able to turn it to our favor. I have answered this question within the context of the classic force under the heading "The Inner Game of the Performer" (*Volume 1*, page 221). The solution lies in confidence, courage and lack of worry, gained through practice, analysis, experience and mental training (we will explore this last activity shortly, in the section on "The Study of Card Conjuring", page 476).

The handling of cards—and of any object used in performance—is a mirror of your internal equilibrium, your confidence and lack of worry. This has greater bearing on some techniques than others. Examples of techniques in which lack of worry and confidence play an important role are the top change, palming and most assuredly the handling of a double card; in other words, those techniques that we label as passive.

### *Naturalness*

**AN EXAMPLE.** The classic force is currently the most natural method for forcing cards. You offer the cards for selection to a spectator exactly as you would if the choice were free.



The spectator does not perceive an unusual procedure, as it doesn't appear to be planned or a specially developed handling. Consequently, if the technique is properly executed, no suspicions are aroused. No one will see, let alone suspect, that your actions have a deceptive purpose. What are the elements that make a technique appear natural to the eye and the various perceptions of the spectator?

**ABSOLUTE AND CONDITIONED NATURALNESS.** The experience of your spectators constitutes the main measure of what seems natural to them. This amounts to something more than subjective experience. It is also culturally influenced. For this reason, there is no body of actions that represents absolute naturalness; that is, postures and movements that will seem natural to everyone everywhere and at all times. The overhand shuffle, for example, is generally more natural in the British and European cultures than is the riffle shuffle—while the reverse is often true in the United States.

You should always handle techniques in a manner natural to the layman. This doesn't mean that you must handle the deck as clumsily as a layperson might. It is sufficient to keep the form of the action—an expert, elegant handling is not only acceptable but is expected of you. Therefore, for techniques to appear natural, it is not necessary for your handlings to conform *precisely* with the spectators' experience.

You must establish a personal naturalness. Since the spectator has no experience that would allow him to determine this, you must create and define it for him. This is called *conditioned naturalness*. The spectators must become accustomed to a specific handling or style of handling.

In the double turnover, for example, there is no absolute naturalness, since there are many ways to turn over a card that would be accepted as natural by a spectator. To make your double turnover appear natural, you should always turn the cards in the same manner, regardless of whether it is a single card or several. This gives the spectators time to become familiar with your personal naturalness. You are, in effect, conditioning them to your manner of natural movement.

It is important that the innocent handling first be executed several times before the deceptive handling is introduced—this is true of the double turnover and for all techniques and handling sequences in a trick.

In the technique descriptions in this course, the above thought has been of central importance and has constantly been applied. That is why certain finger positions have been precisely described, though the direct consequence may not be recognized until much later in the course. But trust me, I only insist on a specific handling or fingering because I am looking ahead to more advanced techniques, the mastery of which I hope to facilitate from the outset. This will save you much time and frustration later. Even should you eventually choose not to use various advanced techniques, you will at least have the satisfaction of knowing that your execution of the easier techniques is superior to others. And that, in my opinion, is certainly worthwhile.

**STATIC NATURALNESS.** The posture of the hand while holding a palmed card is a good example of static naturalness. There are, however, firmly established natural postures for a hand when it is relaxed or innocently occupied. However, these postures must be made consistent within the context of your personal style of motion. It is counterproductive for you to push back your glasses on your nose using the hand palming the card if you only



make this action once. It must be a gesture that you, a person who wears glasses, occasionally execute in precisely the same manner. Only then does it become part of a personal, established naturalness. When you place your hand with the palmed card on the table, it must lay on the table exactly as it would without a card. The easiest way to achieve this is to take note of the most common static poses you assume in the execution of a technique and adopt these poses in your everyday life. For example, each time you place your hand on the table, do so as if it were palming a card. When you are then palming a card, it will not be a source of concern for you, nor will the position be perceived suspiciously by those who, by now, know your mannerisms.

**DYNAMIC NATURALNESS.** This term addresses naturalness in movement. What has just been said regarding static naturalness applies equally to dynamic naturalness. The movements must conform to your normal motions and body language. You cannot directly adopt the handling of a technique from a video or lecture by another performer, since the style of movement of a Tony Slydini is quite different from that of a René Lavand or a Daryl or a Darwin Ortiz—or you.

**UNIFORMITY OF HANDLING.** Let me use the overhand shuffle as an example of uniformity in handling. It would look very suspicious if you used a different fingering for each of the different overhand shuffle techniques. It is therefore important that your hand positions and handling of the normal overhand shuffle be as nearly identical as possible with the hand positions and handling of all other overhand shuffle techniques, in which deception is inserted (in jog shuffles, the lift shuffle, the optical shuffle, etc.). This can be accomplished in two ways: Either the position for the deceptive technique can conform to the normal position or vice versa.

**ECONOMY OF MOTION.** Economy of motion goes hand in hand with naturalness and the internal and external aesthetic of a trick. Economy means that all superfluous and awkward actions be eliminated (on this topic review my comments in "Art and Expression in the Handling of Cards", *Volume 1*, page 3). This has the advantage of producing a tighter, more unified sequence from the audience's standpoint, and greater inner confidence in the performer.

I distinguish between two forms of economy: external economy, which is apparent to the observer, and internal economy of method and construction, in which a single technique replaces several techniques. Let me cite an example of poor internal economy, which I have not invented, but rather have taken from a book by a respected author and magician:

The spectator peeks at a card, noting it, and the performer brings the card secretly to the bottom with an overhand shuffle. The card is next brought to the top with a double cut, and an in jog shuffle is used to place two indifferent cards onto the noted card, leaving it third from the top of the deck. Economy could be achieved by allowing three cards (the peeked card and the two above it) to spring onto the bottom portion of the deck immediately after the peek is made. A break is held above them. A control would then follow, preferably a pass (no motion being visible to the spectators); otherwise, an overhand shuffle. This revised handling gives the trick a new appearance, which features a significant increase in the magical quality of the effect and an intensification of its internal beauty.

Similar examples, often less obvious, may be found by the hundreds in the technical literature. As with most of the elements of performance addressed in this section, economy



of motion is an aspect that spectators will hardly perceive on a conscious level. The audience doesn't consider that the movements could be done differently and that the manner in which you now execute them is more concise and aesthetically pleasing. Yet, they would have noticed had you failed to give this point proper consideration. This phenomenon is well known: A dusted table receives less attention than a dusty one.

**LARGE MOVEMENTS.** Narrow, tiny movements signal that you are hiding something and suggest insecurity. Open, generous movements communicate sincerity and honesty. Remember not to press your elbows against your sides, as it restricts your freedom of movement and makes you look like a robot. This stiff posture may be found even in magicians with great experience. This is particularly true when false counts, palms or the pass are executed, but it can even be seen during overhand shuffles! It is generally advisable, when holding the deck in both hands, to keep it about four to six inches from the body, and when using only one hand, approximately eight inches away. This allows your hands and arms to move freely in clear, relaxed motions. It is also helpful to have a large, uncluttered performing space on the table (which is why, on page 11 of *Volume 1*, I recommended the use of an ample close-up pad).

**MINIMAL HANDLING.** Only hold the cards when it is absolutely necessary. All other times let a spectator hold the deck or place it in full view on the table. This strategy is particularly effective when you are using a stack or gimmicked cards. Place the deck in front of you, where everyone can plainly see that you cannot manipulate it. It should still be within your area of control, so that an overly inquisitive spectator can't grab it. You can define the boundaries of your domain through the deliberate positioning of objects such as the card case, a pen and other cards; or you can simply stand with your hands and arms dominating the space above the deck. Everything under them falls within your territory.

Spectators will remember that you barely handled the deck, and this will make your performance seem all the more wonderful to them.

**EFFORTLESS HANDLING.** The true artist works with a light touch: a single stroke of the brush, guided effortlessly, made lightly, the hand seeming to experience no perceptible strain, moving without obvious skill, reaching its goal with no apparent aid, precisely as the painter intended. Such movements reveal the mastery of the artist. This is exactly how you should handle the deck.

### *Handling and Style*

You can infer from what we have said that technique is not merely a means to an end, as some pragmatists insist. Technique is a means of expression, a set of tools that allows the performer to place his signature on each effect. The solutions you devise for the problems you encounter will be personal ones, direct expressions of your reflection and your decisions. That is why I can't always give a simple, single answer to many of the questions that arise in this course.

Although technique itself should always remain invisible, the manner in which you apply your technique determines your visible style. Only then will you appear to create miracles. For if your technique becomes perceptible, you will only be seen as an exhibitor of interesting curiosities. But then you have failed to be a magician, and will have become merely an amusing craftsman—a finger acrobat.



## Management

Technique can be studied in two basic ways: by itself, with the sleights being isolated and out of context; or within the structure of a trick or routine, in which you study how you introduce or "get into" the technique, how you execute it, and how you conclude or "get out of" it. This analysis of an integrated technique is called management. Management encompasses all the considerations that serve to conceal technique in the course of a trick; in other words, everything that favors the deceptive execution of the technique. In principle, management is a problem of construction. It encompasses all the masking principles, such as misdirection, naturalness and timing (an important topic that we will discuss next), along with practically every principle of presentation (theme, script, etc.).

The descriptions of most of the techniques and tricks in this course already take into consideration the principle of management. Consider, for example, the classic force and the riffle force, which are preceded by the secret positioning of the force card. Or palming, the glimpse, the top change and the pass with their descriptions of the contexts in which they are used. Or the loading of both palmed cards in "Homing Card Plus" (page 288) or the preparation for palming three cards in "The Cards of Capistrano" (page 292).

### Examples

Let's assume you are going to perform "The Spectator Cuts the Aces" (*Volume 1*, page 51), but you want to leave the audience with the impression that the spectator shuffled the entire deck. Prior to performance, secretly remove the four Aces and place them, faces turned toward you, in your outer right-side jacket pocket (or in your right front pants pocket, if you work without a jacket). Have the deck thoroughly shuffled and retrieve it. Next have a spectator choose a card, show it to everyone and return it to the deck. You now control the card to the bottom. (Or, if you prefer, you might first bring it to the top using the overhand shuffle control [*Volume 1*, page 67]; then, with a second shuffle, run it to the bottom; after which you shuffle once more, retaining the bottom card in place [*Volume 1*, page 43]. These three shuffles give spectators a convincing impression that the card is truly lost.)

*"I shall now attempt to locate your card by sense of touch alone. Naturally, I must not be allowed to see anything. But if I'm blindfolded, you might suspect that somehow I can still see."* You may actually want to remove a handkerchief from your pocket and place it on the table as you say this. *"But if I place the deck here in my pocket, then no one can see the cards."* With your right hand, place the deck into your right-side jacket pocket, faces toward the body. Don't flash the bottom card as you do this. As soon as the deck is in the pocket, push the chosen card off the face and add it to the back of the Ace packet. Immediately remove the deck from your pocket, as though you had just thought of something. *"I almost forgot—It's important that you shuffle the deck thoroughly."*

When the spectator has done this, take back the deck and replace it in the jacket pocket, again facing your body, but this time you add the Ace packet to the top of the deck; that is, you slip the deck between your body and the packet. As soon as the Aces are on top of the deck, act as if another fresh idea has just come to you: *"Oh, and please verify that there is nothing and no one in my pocket—no second deck with microchips and no hidden assistants."* Remove the deck from your jacket pocket again, and replace it there, facing the body again, after the spectator has determined that the pocket is empty. *"I shall place the deck you shuffled in the pocket you yourself inspected."*



Someone else is now asked to name a number. Let's say twelve is chosen. With your obviously empty right hand, reach into your pocket and remove eleven cards one at a time from the face of the deck, placing them face down in an unsquared pile on the table. When you remove the twelfth card, take the top one (the selection). Review what has transpired; then slowly turn over the card you hold. It is the spectator's!

As you acknowledge your well-deserved applause, remove the rest of the deck from your pocket (Aces on top) and casually dribble the cards onto the packet on the table. Before you begin to perform "The Spectator Cuts the Aces", take the chosen card and place it somewhere in the center of the tabled deck; then square everything up. Through this casual handling and bold management you have nearly added the four Aces to a deck the spectator has thoroughly shuffled.

You could use exactly this same subterfuge to add one or more special cards to the deck. It can also be adapted to the switching of entire decks.

Let's next examine the management for a card control.

Have a card selected from a fanned deck, noted, then replaced in the fan (see *Volume 1*, page 71). Note here that the degree of freedom allowed for the selection is balanced by the degree of freedom given for the return. Close the fan and execute a diagonal insertion (*Volume 1*, page 69) as you push the projecting card into the deck. Take a left little-finger break over the card and form a step as you table the deck (*Volume 1*, page 33).

Place the deck on the table as you explain, "Please don't forget your card. It will be a minute before I get back to you. Meanwhile, would you please choose a card as well." Pick up the deck as you turn to a second spectator, and form a left little-finger break above the step. Spread the cards from hand to hand as you offer them to a second spectator for a selection to be made. Time the spreading to assure that this card is drawn from those above the first selection.

As the second spectator notes the new selection and shows it to the others, execute a pass at the break, bringing the first selection to the top of the deck. This management of the pass is a good example of how a difficult technique can be successfully employed with only a modicum of effort. The misdirection provided by the display of the second selection allows the pass to be accomplished without risk of detection.

Every sleight and principle of deception requires management if its secret is to remain hidden. Management adds elegance to the construction of a trick and facilitates an apparently effortless performance, because everything progresses logically.

### *Concluding Remarks*

No technique is practical until you have considered its proper handling and management. If you fail to do so, the technique remains purely a mechanical thing, a method, having nothing to do with card artistry. In contrast, an intelligent, competently handled and managed technique constitutes the basic means of expression for your personalized presentation of an effect.

### *Recommended Reading*

Erdnase, S. W., *The Expert at the Card Table* (Chicago, 1902). The annotated editions by Dai Vernon (*Revelations*, Magical Publications: Pasadena; 1984) and Darwin Ortiz (*The Annotated Erdnase*, Magical Publications: 1991) are recommended.



Gallwey, Timothy, *The Inner Game of Tennis* (Bantam: New York; 1984, ISBN 0-553-27372-8). This covers most of what you must know about the execution of a technique and your internal attitude.

Any one or all of the books by or about Dai Vernon, Arturo de Ascanio, Juan Tamariz, José Carroll, René Lavand and Slydini. Add to these *Roger Klauser: In Concert* by Lance Pierce (L & L Publishing: Tahoma; 1991). All these works contain practical examples of masterful handling and intelligent management.



# Timing

Timing is a difficult concept to convey, in part, because the term is used in several different ways. Robert-Houdin may have been the first to discuss the concept in print, writing in 1856 of *un temps*, literally an opportune or a favorable moment.<sup>43</sup>

Timing is more than simply doing the right thing at the right time. The purpose of timing is to mask and protect the secret of a trick. Like naturalness, timing is subject to firm rules, yet must still be subjectively interpreted. Because *timing* has various meanings in everyday use, to avoid confusion I'll explain what we mean by this word when discussing it in the context of magic.

We will first consider timing as an expression of the duration of a handling and of the rhythm of a handling sequence. Then we will discuss timing as an expression of the moment at which deceptive handling occurs and its correspondence with a moment that seems entirely innocent to the spectators.

## Timing and Duration

It may be useful, in defining timing, to eliminate some of the common meanings of the word, which do not pertain to the specific theoretical definition that concerns us.

"*That act was well timed.*" This is a common expression, even among professional program planners. What is meant is that the length of the performance was exactly right. Though it usually applies to an entire act, it can also be used in reference to individual elements of a routine: "*The four-Ace sequence had just the right timing.*" This usage may stem from the more general concept of time itself and the verb *to time*. In any case, it is irrelevant to our theoretical use of the term *timing* whether one's execution of a glide takes two seconds or five—that is a question of one's individual tempo.

Sometimes, when you arrive at a party just on time, someone will say, "*Wow! That was perfect timing.*" What is really meant is simply that you have arrived at the precise time printed on the invitation. It makes no difference in a trick if you execute the pass at 10:18PM or somewhat later. A sleight is not a time bomb.

Timing, in its magical, theoretical sense has less to do with duration than with a point in time. It is not an absolute time (such as 10:18PM), but the *proper moment*. Shortly we will discuss what the proper moment is and how to recognize it. At least we now know what timing is not.

## Timing and Rhythm

"*Those cancan girls have unbelievable timing!*" Obviously, it makes no difference, in the magical sense of the word, how often in ten seconds leggy chorus girls can lift their skirts and kick. (Of course, if we were talking about misdirection, that would be another matter!) The beat of a presentation, its tempo, is not a problem of timing, but of presentation and rhythm. It is, however, critical for the timing that the girls lift their skirts and kick in unison and on the musical beats, the problem being to lift the skirts on the down beat (a strong moment) and lower them on the off beat (a weak moment). We will formulate this more clearly as we move on to discuss timing and the moment.



## Timing and the Moment

What is the "right moment" to execute a deceptive handling? Are there specific moments or movements in a trick that better serve the execution of a secret technique than do others? The answer is a resounding *Yes*, and the categories of these moments can be determined and defined in a way that makes it possible for us to grasp them and apply them to better deceive our spectators.

### Strong and Weak Moments

Slydini is the formulator of the theory of strong and weak moments, and he mastered this secret, used more or less intuitively by the most famous magicians, to absolute perfection, applying it in all of his routines. The point in time at which a strong or weak moment occurs is determined by timing.

**THE STRONG MOMENT.** Each phase in the course of a trick that demands the full attention of the spectators is a strong moment, because something is taking place that is important for an understanding of the effect. It is a moment that conveys an important bit of information and is simultaneously a center of interest for the spectator. Your stance is active: You are leaning forward. You, too, are focused on the center of interest, and often don't even speak. A strong moment is often the climax of an effect, or at least partial climax. In the trick "Homing Card Plus" (page 288) a strong moment occurs in the first phase of the routine, when you remove the card from your pocket. The fact that a card has appeared in a pocket previously shown empty is an effect, and therefore a strong moment.

**THE WEAK MOMENT.** The period of time immediately following a strong moment is a weak moment. Tension is built as the climax is reached, then released when the resulting surprise is sprung. The spectators use this moment to recover from the tension and relax. In "Homing Card Plus" the spectators' attention eases a bit when they see that a card has arrived in the pocket. You seem to relax as well. (If you are doing a trick seated at a table, you would lean back in a passive stance.) You now look at the spectators, and if it is suitable (and most often it is), casually say something to them. As you do this, you palm the top card of the deck. You now focus attention back on the pocket and remove the signed, palmed card for verification.

The rule is: All the secret technical moments must coincide with weak moments. The sequence of these moments determines the rhythm of the trick, and that is the only connection between timing and rhythm. Rhythm is a reference to duration. Timing refers to moments within that duration.

### In-transit Actions

*In-transit actions* is Ascario's term for a class of movement that joins two major actions. Let's assume that you want to remove a pen from the left inner breast-pocket of your jacket. You would probably hold open your jacket with your left hand (an associated secondary action) to assist your right hand in reaching into the pocket to remove the pen (the primary action). At the moment of execution and, later, in the memories of the spectators, only the primary action leaves an impression. After all, it is this action that achieves the goal, satisfies the purpose—while the peripheral secondary actions are barely perceptible "necessary evils", required only to carry out the primary action. And no one will notice if your left hand steals a small wax pellet from your jacket button as that hand performs its menial function.



It follows, however, that primary actions must be anticipated as such; otherwise the associated secondary actions might easily be misperceived as primary ones. If you say, "Do you have a pen? Just a moment, I think I have one here," and only then reach into your pocket, your holding open the jacket is clearly an in-transit action. But if you simply open your jacket without first introducing your motive, it will be initially perceived as an independent action, and only in retrospect will the necessity of the action be recognized. This is bad psychology.

The justification must be obvious before the action is carried out. If you are planning to load a palmed card into your pocket under cover of removing a handkerchief from that pocket, you might preface the action as follows: "And now I need a clean handkerchief. Does anyone have one with them? If not, I'll use my own." Only now, with everyone aware that you are looking for a handkerchief and have one of your own available, do you reach into the pocket, releasing the palmed card and removing the handkerchief. This handling is logical, even if someone then hands you a handkerchief to use.

The rule is: All secret actions must be imbedded (made secondary) within an associated (primary) actions. You will find hundreds of examples of this throughout this course.

Analysis of the proper performance of a trick will confirm that secret techniques always take place within the context of in-transit actions or, rather, at weak moments in the course of the trick.

Using these theories in actual performance is a problem of presentation, and their conception and placement within the trick a problem of construction.

### *Timing and Coördination*

Coördination refers to the tuned and harmonious execution of various procedures. The thread of coördination travels through virtually every theoretical concern we have addressed in this chapter: technique (motor skills), construction, presentation, and direction of attention.

#### *Timing as a Motor Skill*

We must first consider the interplay of muscular actions that results in a desired movement. This is perhaps the most obvious aspect of timing. You only push a double card over during an Elmsley count when your left hand, holding the first card displayed, is returning to the packet. If you push the double over too soon, the unusual configuration of the two cards on the packet catches the eye; and if you push the double over too late, an undesirable pause is introduced into the procedure. This holds true for all sleights—palming, the top change—every one, without exception.

#### *Timing in Construction*

We have previously discussed the elements of a successful construction. The rules of timing dictate that these elements be employed at the proper moments and with respect to each other. Timing determines the syntax, the organization of a sequence of movements; the most advantageous moments for the various phases of the trick to occur. When a word is misplaced, the reader will stumble over the sentence, and the misplaced word may render the sentence meaningless or open to misinterpretation. The words in a sentence only take on meaning in relation to one another and when properly ordered and connected. The same is true of the discreet sequences of movements in a trick.



An example: For a change, let's consider a gambling expose for the game of Draw Poker. In the course of assembling the cards after a previous round you, as dealer, manage to secretly gather a good hand at the bottom of the deck. You also install a concave crimp in the near ends of these five cards, so that they can be easily and quickly released from the bottom of the deck. Give the deck a false shuffle, a false cut, then deal a new round of hands. Concluding the deal, you set the deck just to the right of your Poker hand, then pick up the hand. After looking at your cards, place your Poker hand directly onto the deck and, in a continuous action, pick up the deck, less the five crimped cards, which remain on the table. Immediately deal out any cards requested for the draw.

This exchange of cards, known as the jinx change, is unquestionably bold, but it is entirely deceptive here because it is executed at the perfect moment within the construction of an established procedure: the dealing of cards for the draw.

### *Timing in Presentation*

Proper timing in presentation will ensure clarity of understanding. This is true for each element of presentation, in particular for the correspondence between script and action.

Let's take an example. We've already discussed the Rule of Three (page 422). Naturally, this rule applies to timing as well. The ideas you wish to communicate are best understood when you package the elements of information in units of three, followed by a pause, followed by another triplet of informational elements. For instance: "You have shuffled (1) your card (2) back into the deck (3)." Pause. "It is impossible (1) for me (2) to find your card (3)." Pause. "Name (1) any number (2), say between one and ten, to keep things interesting (3)." Pause. These pauses are no more than breathing rests or thoughtful hesitations, not coffee breaks. The untutored listener will barely notice them, but they are extremely effective within the overall expression. Can you imagine a piece of music without pauses? Timing in the delivery of your script determines whether your words make the intended impression on the spectator.

### *Timing in the Direction of Attention*

A source of information source generally lasts only a few seconds, and must make its appearance at the proper time to become a center of attention for the spectator. All the principles of attention direction only serve their intended purpose of masking a secret when they are properly coordinated. The coordination of the elements discussed above is a problem of internal organization that can be solved by timing.

### *Timing and Simultaneity*

Finally, we come to that form of timing that unites actions that, in principle, take place on different levels. Imagine several transparent sheets. The first sheet has black text printed on it, the second has spots of red, the third spots of blue and the fourth a background of white. When these sheets are superimposed in precise alignment, the layout for the dustwrapper of this book results. This is a physical example of the kind of solution that timing provides in the temporal domain. Timing brings together the various levels of content (technique, presentation, etc.), so that they occur simultaneously at the right moments. The impression on the audience is the result of the simultaneity of these moments.

This may be clarified by examining the synchronized dubbing of a film. In principle, such synchronization is simple: You erase the original soundtrack and lay down the preferred



version over it—it is as easy as playing the piano. All the speakers supplying the dubbed dialog need to do is speak at the same moments the screen actors speak, using sentences of the same length and with the same content as the original. They must also duplicate the actors' accents, intonations and volume, as these elements communicate the emotional nuances underlying the words (rhetoric and diction). Achieving this goal is facilitated by the facial expressions and gestures on the screen (body language in the presentation), the spectators' identification of the roles (the theme of the presentation), the expectations of the spectators (direction of attention) and the meaning of the scene within the context of the film (the construction). All this, however, is worthless if the speakers don't synchronize the words to the lip motions on the screen (technique).

Timing determines the moment when the speaker inserts the word into the mouth of the actor, so that the complex visual and abstract context (presentation, construction and direction of attention) becomes meaningful for the spectator.

### Summary

In his classic text on mental magic, *Thirteen Steps to Mentalism*, Corinda wrote, "Good timing is invisible—bad timing stands out a mile."

Timing is a difficult concept to grasp because it is one level of abstraction higher from already abstract concepts like presentation, construction and direction of attention. It refers not to the duration of the handling or the rhythm of a handling sequence, but to the moment at which a secret action is executed; coordinated and synchronous with an apparently innocent moment. Studying and understanding timing, then, is the science of the moment—using it in your magic is an art.

### Recommended Reading

Ascanio, Arturo de. Any works that you can obtain by him are enthusiastically and unreservedly recommended. Those currently available in English are woefully sparse, but plans for the translation of his major works are being made.

Fulves, Karl, *The Best of Slydini...and More* (Louis Tannen: New York; 1976).

Fulves, Karl, *The Magical World of Slydini* (D. Robbins & Co.: Brooklyn; 1979). Both these books about Slydini, acclaimed as classics upon publication, contain the essence of the Slydini philosophy. Even if you never perform one of Slydini's tricks, the insights gained through a study of these books can be applied to all your magic.

Ganson, Lewis, *The Magic of Slydini* (Supreme: London; 1960).

Goshman, Albert and Patrick Page, *Magic by Gosh: The Life and Times of Albert Goshman* (Goshman: CA; 1985). This is the big book by and about Albert Goshman, one of the genuine masters of twentieth century close-up magic. Most of his tricks have little to do with technique, but everything to do with timing.

Nathanson, Leon, *Slydini Encores* (Slydini Studio of Magic: New York; 1966). Although the Fulves texts on Slydini's magic were meant to supersede this volume and Ganson's above, these earlier works are still well worth studying.

Vernon, Dai, *Malini and his Magic* (Supreme: Bideford; 1976). Malini, whom Vernon characterized as the grand master of misdirection and timing, wrought miracles. This book contains Vernon's reminiscences of him, with a number of outstanding ideas for tricks.



# Outs for Disasters and Disturbances

We will now examine methods for dealing with unexpected situations from which you must extricate yourself. Some awkward situations may be self provoked; others arise from particular spectators. Magicians call the strategies needed to overcome these situations *outs*. We will approach the subject systematically. Practical examples will enable you to cope with similar situations in your own performances, or better yet, to prevent them altogether.

## Disasters

You must understand that disasters during your performances are your responsibility. It is impossible to list all the things that could go wrong in the course of a performance; that is ultimately determined by each specific trick. But we can examine various categories of disasters and discuss the various strategies employed to overcome them.

### Preventing Disasters

**PROPER PREPARATION.** Proper preparation helps to prevent disasters. This includes a thorough study of your presentation and techniques, and a list of the props required, should there be something more than a deck of cards.

**GOOD TOOLS.** Only use quality playing cards. And always use a deck in good condition. Don't skimp, as bad cards can often cause technical problems. There is a saying: *A bad craftsman always blames his tools*. Never use the excuse that your cards are bad—no one will believe you anyway; nor should they need to.

**COMPREHENSIVE KNOW-HOW.** The greater your knowledge of card conjuring, in particular of its techniques, the more tools you will have at your disposal for coping with disasters. The expert draws from the whole wealth of his craft, while the bungler struggles with his few coppers of knowledge. So it is worthwhile, particularly for disastrous situations, to have greater knowledge and ability than is strictly necessary for the performance of a particular trick.

**PREVENTING THE LOSS OF A CARD.** It can happen that you lose track of a chosen card during your attempt to control it. The following strategies are designed to compensate for such mishaps.

Many experts, particularly those of the old school, recommend that chosen cards always be forced. I think this is an excellent idea, provided that you use the classic force, as it conforms most closely to the manner in which the free choice of a card would be offered. Now if your control fails, you know the identity of the card. And should the spectator insist on shuffling the deck before you are able to control his selection and palm it away, you can accede to his demand with confidence. Afterward, you need only spread through the cards and use the spread cull (*Volume 1*, page 187) to put your trick back on track. Your excuse for spreading through the cards might be *"I hope you are certain that your card is still in the deck."*

As an alternative, you can glimpse the card (Chapter 23, page 353) or crimp a corner (Chapter 22, page 345) as soon as the selection has been brought to the top or bottom of the deck. No matter what happens now, you will be able to conclude successfully, even if the spectator shuffles the cards.



**INFORMATION.** You will find that you will experience most of your problems at the very beginning of a trick or during an important sequence. This may be the result of carelessness, nervousness or inattention. Whatever the cause, what's done is done. What do you do now?

A good precaution is to give your spectators no more information than necessary. Keeping them from knowing what you plan to do can be your salvation from most situations in which an early error is made. As soon as you become aware of the mistake, act as if everything is proceeding as planned. The fact that the spectators don't know where you are heading allows you to salvage most disasters simply by giving the trick an alternative conclusion. Bring the trick to a logical climax as quickly as possible, even though this will almost certainly be a weaker trick than originally intended. That is still better than admitting an error was made.

### *Technical Mistakes*

Technical mistakes can happen with any technique. Sometimes a slip will only be noticed by a few spectators and you will learn to recognize from their eyes who they are. Take these spectators into your confidence with a friendly wink: *"Let's keep that to ourselves, okay?"* Sometimes, though, the mistake is so blatant that everyone sees it. A few examples will serve to illustrate possible outs.

**DOUBLE CARDS SLIP OUT OF ALIGNMENT.** Immediately say, *"Whoops! I got two that time. The cards seem to be sticking a bit."* Forge ahead without turning red, performing a different trick, one not requiring a double lift or turnover, but in which a single card is held or turned over several times in precisely the same fashion used for the failed double-card maneuver. A double lift or turnover can sometimes be replaced by a glide or top change.

**A FAILED FORCE.** This is common with the classic force, particularly in the early stages of mastering it. Outs for this situation are discussed in some detail in *Volume 1*, page 222.

**A PRE-ARRANGED DECK FALLS ON THE FLOOR.** When a deck that is partially or completely set in a specific order falls on the floor, it is best to perform a different trick. A small set up can be reconstructed in the course of that trick. Here's one possible course of action:

Force a known card and allow the spectator to shuffle it into the deck. Take the deck back and spread it between your hands, faces toward you. *"I shall now attempt to find your card—even though you have shuffled them yourself. I know that sounds impossible—but it's my job to make the impossible possible. That might be your card..."* During this monologue, bring the first few cards of your set up to the face of the deck and place an indifferent card face down on the table. *"I'm not sure—no, really. You're not the right type for that card. Hold on a second. Okay, okay—now it's clear!"* Spread through the rest of the cards, completing your set up on the face of the deck. Replace the indifferent card on the table into the deck and lay the force card face down in its place. Have the spectator name the chosen card, then dramatically turn up the tabled card—it is the spectator's selection! Not a bad trick, in and of itself, but it has also allowed you to reconstruct your set up. Incidentally, this strategy can be useful for setting up a trick extemporaneously. It is a good example of intelligent management.

But what can you do if the set up is so complex that you don't have it memorized? The most practical solution is simply to perform a different trick altogether. For important situations, you could have a duplicate set of the pre-arranged cards with you and palm them



onto the deck or add them in the course of another trick (see page 453 for a practical method of accomplishing this). For a full-deck set up, a trick that allows you to switch in tional nicely for this purpose).

**YOU LOSE THE SPECTATOR'S CARD.** It is best to prevent this disaster—as discussed under the previous heading “Preventing the Loss of a Card” (page 461). However, here are a few strategies and tricks to help you master such a situation.

1. *Production of the card.* Place a card face down on the table. The spectator names the chosen card and you know immediately that you have laid down the wrong card. “I placed one card on the table before you named your card. Now remember, you could have chosen any one of these cards.” As you say this, you spread the cards between your hands, faces toward you. Quickly locate the chosen card and bring it to the top using a spread cull (Volume 1, page 187); or take a break under it while closing the spread, and bring it to the top with a double cut (Volume 1, page 95). Invite the spectator to turn up the tabled card, and when she does so, palm the chosen card in your right hand. The spectator, nonplused, will point out that this is not her chosen card. “Of course it’s not your card, because in my pocket...” With your right hand, reach into your pocket and release the palmed card as you remove several other objects there, such as coins or a handkerchief. Now, with an obviously empty right hand, reach back into the pocket and bring forth the card. “...is a card I placed there at the very beginning—yours!” Don’t underestimate the subtlety of removing the other objects from the pocket—it works wonders.
2. *Use the spectator as an out.* Using the same ploy described above, have the card named and the tabled card turned face up, using this opportunity to locate and control the chosen card to the top. “That would have been a miracle. How could I find your card if I didn’t even know which one it was?” Have the spectator empty the left inner breast-pocket of his jacket, and place the deck into it with the cards facing him. “You will find the card for me. After all, it is your card.” Through this build up the spectators will probably have forgotten that you manipulated the cards after the spectator told you the name of the selection. With some urgency in your voice, say to the spectator, “Quickly, reach into your pocket and take out a single card. Quickly—just one!” If it is the correct card, which it quite often is, great! If not, you continue, “You see, it’s not so easy. It requires an extremely sensitive touch and a lot of practice.” Showing your hand clearly empty, reach into the spectator’s jacket pocket and bring the chosen card out yourself.
3. *Have the mate named.* As soon as you know that you have lost control of the spectator’s card, ask her to name its mate (a card of the same color and value, but a different suit). This has the psychological advantage of avoiding having the spectator name the chosen card directly. Spread through the deck with the cards facing you, locating and controlling the selection to the top under the pretense of finding the mate, which you then place on the table.

You now have the mate on the table and the selection on top of the deck. Palm off the selection and use this hand to empty your right front trouser’s pocket. In doing this, secretly leave the palmed card behind. Next, very cleanly take the mate at the tips of your fingers and insert it into the same pocket. Explain that birds of a feather flock together and, according to the rule of hyper-hydroponic magnetic attraction, which you



have recently discovered, the mate will invisibly attract its brother. Show your hand empty and, reaching into your pocket with just thumb and index finger, extract both cards and successfully conclude.

Alternatively, you can use the mate as part of the crisscross force (*Volume 1*, page 85) as follows: Have the spectator insert the mate face up anywhere in the center of the deck. Cut the deck at that location and "mark the cut" by crossing the halves. After an appropriate time delay, show that the top card of the bottom half is the selection—the mate has succeeded in finding its twin! You could also use almost any of the outs described on pages 222-224 (*Volume 1*).

4. *Hopeless cases.* If there seems no possibility of locating the selection, try this. Have a second spectator choose a card, note it and return it to the deck. Control it to the top, shuffle it to the bottom, then add an indifferent card to the face with a triple cut (page 97, *Volume 1*). The spectator's card now lies second from the bottom. Hold the deck in glide position (page 121, *Volume 1*) and ask the first spectator to name his card. Then tell him, "Your card is a detective card and will find your friend's card." Draw cards off the bottom of the deck, executing the glide on the second take and removing cards from above the second selection until the first chosen card appears. "Ah ha! Here is our detective." Ask the second spectator to name her card. Then draw off the second selection and show that the "detective card" has indeed achieved the impossible.
5. *Out with a gag.* Turn your predicament into a comic situation. Hold a card face down and have the spectator name his selection. Look at the card you hold and enthusiastically cry, "Correct!" Then immediately insert it into the deck without having shown it to anyone. Laugh with the spectators and quickly move onto the next trick.

### *Disturbances from the Audience*

During a performance you will encounter not only self-created disasters, but others that arise from the behavior of individual spectators. We'll call these disasters *disturbances*.

Disruptive individuals—persons who create disturbances—may pop up at any time, anywhere, from the midst of the most intimate circle of friends to an audience for a large stage show. Therefore, it is important to recognize the kind of disturbance and understand its cause. It is in precisely such emergencies, which are fortunately rare, that your mastery is really put to the test. If you can deal confidently with disturbances and keep the situation in hand, you will earn the respect and good will of the audience, and quite often of the disruptive individual as well. It is important to distinguish between intentional and unintentional disturbances. But first we will discuss preventive strategies, which generally apply to both kinds of disturbances.

#### *Strategies for Preventing Disturbances*

In this case, an ounce of prevention is truly worth a pound of cure. This is the most important section of this chapter, for it contains the true secrets, that are not found in any other magic book.

**GOOD RELATIONSHIPS.** The most decisive element in the prevention of disasters (and one crucial to performing in general) is the forging of a personal relationship with your audience. The stronger this relationship is, the more likable they find you, the less disastrous it is when something goes wrong. They will not only forgive you, they will actually find



you more likable than before! In most cases, the audience's goodwill may actually prevent them from noticing that something has gone wrong, since their sympathies influence their perceptions. So the better your relationship with an audience, the easier it will be for you to apply the out strategies when you need them. Here are a few hints on how to win the audience's goodwill:

1. People like people with whom they can identify. In intimate performing conditions, the more eccentric your appearance or behavior, the more time you will require to achieve a warm working relationship. On the other hand, in parlour and stage performances, appearing and behaving like an eccentric can create a strong bond between audience and performer, provided the material and its presentation are excellent.
2. Speak in a friendly and pleasant tone of voice. (See my previous discussion on voice, page 411.)
3. Present a friendly face and smile freely.
4. Use deliberately clear and open body language.
5. If you want people to like you, then you must first like them. Show this from the beginning, and eliminate any gags or remarks that might be offensive to any member of the audience. Take particular care to eliminate any sexist comments.
6. Be friendly to individuals who are aggressive toward you or behave foolishly. He or she may turn out to be the head of the company that hired you!
7. Arrogance and pomposity on your part are the best guarantee that each spectator will do everything possible to make your life difficult.

For a more complete discussion of these themes, see the recommended reading list at the end of this chapter.

**AUTHORITY AND RESPECT.** Earn authority and respect, in the best senses of these terms, by deserving them. You can then be almost certain that you will encounter no challenges from the audience. But how can you achieve this?

In my experience there are two major factors: Be likable (see above) and understand your profession. In other words, think and practice, think and practice, think and practice. The longer you consciously deal with card conjuring, the more competent you will become each day. People respect talent and ability. If you have mastered your tricks, regardless of their level of difficulty, you will experience few if any disturbances. The famous Swedish-American vaudeville magician Nate Leipzig expressed this by saying, *"They like to feel that a gentleman has fooled them."*

**CHOOSING SPECTATORS.** Which spectators you choose to work with, whether they are merely to select a card from the deck or to follow other directions, can make a great difference. Some spectators will be favorably disposed toward you, while others may harbor indifferent or even negative attitudes toward magic and you as its presenter. Obviously, you always want to work with someone who is on your side. But how can you be certain of this? Unfortunately, one can never be totally sure. However, a good strategy is to perform one or two tricks in which the spectators play no important role. This gives you an opportunity to monitor their reactions. With a little experience and a firm grasp of human nature you will rarely choose a potential heckler or trouble-maker to assist you.



**CLARITY OF INSTRUCTIONS.** Unintentional disturbances may often be traced back to unclear instructions on your part. For example, the spectator confuses the chosen card with another. To prevent this, you must make sure that the spectator notes the card properly. I know this sounds self-evident, but professional experience demonstrates that such cases frequently arise. The solution may be found in a gag. After the spectator has selected a card, say, *"Please note the card carefully and don't forget it. It makes for a more amusing finish!"* This humorous ploy comes from the clever Dutch magician, Dick Koomwinder.

Richard Hatch (my able translator who protests my calling him such) successfully uses a variant on the Koomwinder line in his performances: *"Try to remember your card, because if you forget it, it makes my job much too easy."*

Or you may explain quite explicitly, but politely, *"Someone who doesn't deal with cards on a daily basis may confuse a club with a spade or a heart with a diamond. Please take another good look at the card—I'll come back to it later."* Or *"You'll have to remember the card for a few minutes, so please take another good look at it and learn all the relevant details by heart."* In any case, always make sure that the card is shown to several neighboring spectators as a preventive measure.

### *Unintentional Disturbances*

Unintentional disturbances occur frequently. It is important to recognize them as such, to avoid unnecessarily embarrassing the spectator. The general rule is: In cases of unintentional disturbances, be polite and deflect blame from the spectator, as the situation is naturally embarrassing to the participant. This approach will make you a friend. Here are a few categories of unintentional disturbances and ways of dealing with them.

**THE SPECTATOR NAMES THE WRONG CARD.** Here the spectator unwittingly confuses the chosen card with another. For example, the Jack of Hearts is named instead of the King of Hearts. If you have taken care, as advised above, to have the card shown to everyone at the beginning, it should suffice for you to repeat the misnamed card. Generally someone will speak up, naming the correct card and eliminating the problem for you.

But let's take the worst case, in which the audience supports the spectator and confirms the miscall, either because several others have confused the card themselves, or have forgotten it, or simply don't trust their memories enough to come to your defense. In such circumstances, any of the strategies discussed under "You Lose the Spectator's Card" (page 463) can be applied. In hopeless cases you can always resort to one of the gags I will explain under "The Spectator Forgets the Chosen Card" (facing page).

**A SPECTATOR CONSTANTLY WHISPERS WITH ANOTHER SPECTATOR.** This is also an unintentional disturbance, since the perpetrator is generally unaware that the behavior is disruptive. Because the spectators are whispering, you can't be sure what they are talking about. Are they sharing something personal, discussing possible explanations of the current trick, praising you? Whether the content is negative or positive, whispering is not only disturbing to you, but to the other spectators, and interferes with the creation of a magical atmosphere. Often it is enough for you to look in their direction and smile, holding your gaze on the whispering spectators for a few seconds.

But if you hold your gaze for three seconds without a positive result, smile while saying in a stage whisper, *"Pardon me. This trick requires deep concentration."*



If the spectators ignore your request and continue to whisper, you must take a more direct approach: *"I hope you don't mind if I speak too."* Or *"Had I known there would be too (or three) of us on the program I would have demanded a higher fee."* And Mark Twain's *"You belong to that class of individuals who are only enjoyable in small doses."* Well, I'd never actually use that line, but there have been situations when circumstances have made me wish I could.

In these situations I prefer to be quite candid: *"Look, I really don't want to lecture you, but it does bother me if you constantly talk."* Stated forthrightly and directly, this should not offend any intelligent person. Smile throughout, so that the spectators do not feel they have been reprimanded. You really don't want to lecture anyone, but wish simply to create the best possible conditions for your performance.

### *The Spectator Makes a Mistake*

Should the fault lie clearly with the spectator, it will be regarded by everyone as natural for you simply to start over from the beginning. If that is not possible, or you prefer not to do so for other reasons, be polite to the spectator and do another trick. *"Don't worry. We are just starting—the best is yet to come."* I smile at the spectator who made the mistake and proceed with the performance. These words and smile have the function of putting the erring person at ease.

Examples of mistakes a spectator might make would be: Signing the back of a chosen card instead of the face, or giving your stacked deck a fancy cut, thus destroying its cyclical order, rather than giving it the straight cut you desired. Often such errors are more the performer's failure than the spectator's, due to unclear instructions. Proper wording (*"Please sign the card on its face—that's the front of the card. Otherwise, you would make it too easy for me, wouldn't you?"*) and clear body language (pantomime a straight cut next to the tabled deck as you ask the spectator to cut) will circumvent the majority of such problems.

**THE SPECTATOR FORGETS THE CHOSEN CARD.** With complex constructions it can happen that a spectator simply forgets the chosen card. This can be offset, as already mentioned, by making sure that everyone sees the card when it is first chosen. However, if the spectator forgets, say, a card merely peeked at or thought of, the identity of which no one else knows, you can laugh with the other spectators, because such a situation is in fact humorous. As a gag you could bring out a piece of string and tie it around the spectator's finger, then repeat the trick. If a repetition would take too long, perform something else. In many effects you can have the chosen card signed on the face, so that everyone can instantly confirm that you have found the correct card.

### *Intentional Disturbances*

Every intentional disturbance calls into question the mentality and character of the person creating it. It is important to understand the intent of the disturbance if you are to respond appropriately. Otherwise you may find yourself shooting cannons at sparrows.

The spectator may feel the performance is a challenge to his intellect, or that you have compromised his status in the group, or he may simply hate to see things that he cannot understand. These possibilities lead to an important consequence for you: You must compose your script, body language and facial expressions to avoid encouraging or confirming such reactions. Let's look at several strategies for elegantly overcoming serious situations.



**IGNORING THE PERPETRATOR.** The first strategy, which will resolve nearly half of all cases, is to ignore the disturbance. Simply continue as though no one had said a thing. The heckler knows that he said something, and he knows that you heard it and are deliberately ignoring it. He also knows that to continue would put him on a collision course with you. For most, the pressure of that knowledge is sufficient to induce self-restraint.

In more persistent cases, look at the heckler, smile and hold your gaze for several seconds without saying anything. Only then continue the performance. If deemed necessary, you might nod at the person and say, *"That's fine."* The heckler will understand.

If the heckler actively challenges you, you can say, *"Permit me to finish my performance first. Then I'll get back to you, okay?"* At the finish you simply ignore him. He must overcome a great deal of resistance to challenge you again, particularly as you are being applauded for a successful performance by the rest of the audience. But for really hard cases, I will give additional strategies when we discuss challenge situations, further down the page. Also review "A Spectator Constantly Whispers with Another Spectator" (page 466) for several good solutions.

**THE SPECTATOR LIES.** A common example will illustrate this category of problems. As you near the climax of a trick, a card you have produced from the deck lies face down on the table. You ask the spectator to name the selection and the answer is *"The Queen of Hearts."* You turn the card face up and it is—the Seven of Clubs. You know that this is the spectator's card and that he has simply lied.

This will never happen to you as described above if you always take the precaution of knowing the identity of the card you place on the table. That puts you one step ahead of your opponent. Now you can use the outs described under "You Lose the Spectator's Card" (page 463). As mentioned there, you can avoid the problem altogether by making sure that the spectator shows the card to everyone except you when it is first chosen. You would have to be greatly hated for all the spectators to lie about the identity of the card chosen!

But what can you do if the spectator merely thinks of a card and is the only one who knows its identity? First, you must have the spectator name the card before you turn up the one on the table, whose identity you know. You can then proceed as suggested in "You Lose the Spectator's Card". (Another aspect of this problem can be that the spectator refuses to name the card. I'll discuss solutions to this obstacle shortly.)

**CHALLENGE FROM A SPECTATOR.** Precisely because you are good, but not absolutely god-like, it can happen that a spectator will challenge you. I can recall a situation early in my career, when a spectator suddenly said to me, *"I'm thinking of a card. Can you tell me which one?"* I spontaneously responded, *"Of course I can."* This already put the spectator on uncertain footing while saving face for me. I immediately added, *"But what you are asking now has nothing to do with magic. It's simply a challenge. If I accept it and fail, I'll look foolish. But if I accept it and succeed, you will look foolish. Either way, one of us looks bad, and I don't think you want that—and neither do I."*

Let's analyze what was said, as it illuminates an important principle. When a spectator says something, communication generally takes place on at least two planes: first at the literal level; second at the emotional level. The principle is: Address the emotion behind the challenge and appease this, rather than directly addressing the literal content of the challenge. The spectator's emotional state is what is actually inspiring the content of the statement. So when he said, *"I'm thinking of a card, can you tell me which one?"* he is really saying much more, namely, that he is insecure and frustrated, for whatever reasons.



With the response described above you indirectly address the emotions that initiated the remark. I can hardly imagine that you wouldn't overcome this situation. You have circumvented the problem with dignity and diplomacy. In any case, you now have the intelligent spectators on your side.

If the spectator stubbornly insists that it makes no difference to him if you make a fool of yourself, then you really have very little to hope for from this audience. If you are at a paid engagement, you can depart as diplomatically as possible from this group and proceed on to the next. In the face of open challenge or hostility, you might say, *"Look, I know my tricks already. I'm doing them for you. If you don't want to see them, I respect your opinion."* Or *"I'm a performer, not a scientist. I'm not here to challenge your intelligence, but to bring you an unusual experience. If that doesn't interest you, I naturally respect your point of view."*

Let's examine one more concrete example, which I will lead you through step by step.

Your status as a card expert will be fairly low in the beginning, particularly at an informal gathering of your friends. It is quite possible that some capricious acquaintance will take advantage of an opportune moment to pick up the deck and say, *"I'm going to take a card myself now, shuffle it into the deck and let you try to find it."* Accept the challenge, which is easier to overcome than you might think. Usually the spectator simply wants to be sure of a free choice, perhaps having heard something about magicians forcing cards. Tell the spectator to shuffle the cards. As soon as he stops, you press on: *"That's not nearly enough. Really shuffle them well."* Then ask him to hand the deck to another spectator. *"You shuffle them, too. And you too, please; one more time."*

By pressing forward with the spectator's request ad absurdum, you expose it to ridicule and the spectator will often begin to have a guilty conscience about the whole affair. Now he is to choose a card. If he permits, take the deck and ribbon spread it face down on the table. If that has been allowed, you have already overcome the first obstacle. You press on by asking, *"Are you certain that you want that card and not another one? You may think that I already know which card it is. You can take any other card you like."* This overly insistent behavior on your part mirrors the childish attitude of the spectator. Again you are addressing him on his emotional plane. This can help to loosen blockades. Try to introduce a key-card control like that on page 138 (*Volume 1*) or the glimpse and placement control on page 140.

If he doesn't permit these avenues to you, let him shuffle the card back into the deck himself. Then remove a card from the deck and place it face down on the table. Have him name his card, and continue as described in "You Lose the Spectator's Card" (page 463).

1. *Out with a Key Card.* If you are allowed to touch the deck before the card is replaced, create a key card with a crimp during an overhand shuffle (page 348) and cut it to the center of the deck. Ribbon spread the deck, so that only you can see the crimp at the inner end. Then gesture toward the center of the spread and ask the spectator to replace his card. Count the number of cards between the selection and the key card. If the card is placed near one end of the spread, count from that end. Either way, you know the position of the card relative to the key card or to the top or bottom of the deck. You can easily gain control of the card with an overhand shuffle.
2. *Out with a Separate Trick.* If you sense that the spectator will allow you to structure the procedure, say, *"Great, let's make it really impossible by putting the deck behind*



my back where nothing can be manipulated." The spectator places the shuffled deck in your hands as you hold them behind your back. He then removes any card from the deck, notes it and replaces it on top. "Come around to the front, so that I can attempt to divine the card purely through the power of thought." With your right hand, palm the card and briefly touch your forehead with your right fingertips. It is easy to glimpse the palmed card as you do this. Replace the card on the deck behind your back, look the spectator in the eyes and hesitatingly name his card.

3. *Another Challenge.* If a spectator says he wants to think of a card, you say, "If you do so and I find the card, everyone will say that we pre-arranged this to impress them. So let's have three of the group determine a card independent of each other. It should be obvious to everyone that I didn't pre-arrange something with all three." The first spectator selects the color: red or black? "Red." The second spectator picks the suit. "Diamonds." And the third picks the value. "Ten." You say, "Three individuals have independently determined a single card: red, Diamonds, Ten—the Ten of Diamonds—which is somewhere in this deck." As you say this, you spread the deck face up between your hands and locate the Ten of Diamonds. Keeping the cards spread, press the nail of your right middle finger firmly into the right edge of the card, producing a nick. Under cover of the fan you could also crimp the card's inner right corner or slide your nail firmly along the edge of the card, scratching it. If the cards aren't brand new, this produces a white line on the edge, which can be spotted when the cards are squared. Have the deck shuffled, then locate the marked card. Another possible course of action is to cull the named card to the back of the deck, turn the cards face down, then palm off the chosen card as you hand the pack out for shuffling.
4. *Out with a Gag.* I always carry a gag item in my wallet, specifically for challenge situations. It is a special card that can be bought in magic shops in either normal or "jumbo" size. On one side is a card back; on the other is printed all fifty-two cards of the deck in miniature. These appear in four rows of thirteen cards each, arranged by suit and value. If anyone is particularly insistent that I find their thought-of card, I say, "I already knew yesterday what card you would think of today. As proof, I brought a duplicate of your card in my wallet. So that there can be no controversy, please name your card, loud and clear." It is unimportant if the spectator names the card or not. I pull out the special card and place it right in front of him: "Correct. It is on there somewhere." The laughter resulting from this gag provides cover for you to locate the named card in the deck, palm it off and then produce it from your pocket or some other place. If you have thought to use one of the gimmicked Card-to-Wallet wallets available from magic dealers (like the Balducci or Kaps wallets) to carry the gag card, you can load the palmed card into the wallet, then produce the card from the zippered compartment of the wallet.
5. *Out with a Location.* Many location tricks found in the literature can be adapted to become outs for such situations. Dai Vernon's trick "Emotional Reaction" is a wonderful example of the type of trick that can be employed for this purpose.<sup>44</sup>

**STUBBORN DISTURBANCES.** In extreme cases of deliberate disturbance your options for solving the problem are guided by whether you are working a paid or an unpaid engagement.

1. *Paid Engagements.* If, after several attempts at mediation, you find that a spectator is continuing to be intentionally disruptive, bring the trick to a conclusion, excuse yourself graciously and leave the table at which you are performing.



2. *Unpaid Engagements.* Among acquaintances, you can simply stop and place the cards in your pocket. As you do, begin to talk about something else, as though your performance were over. If the other spectators urge you to continue the performance, you can explain with polite determination, "Look, I don't do magic for myself. I've seen my tricks already. I do magic for you. But if there is anyone who doesn't like it, I naturally respect that. After all, not everyone likes caviar—and sometimes tuna-fish sandwiches are fine." You can cut the last sentence if it doesn't suit you—it fits me, as I love to eat (and it shows).

Use this strategy only as a last resort, and even then with a friendly tone and a smile on your lips. You don't want to insult anyone, but you should protect yourself and the others from a disastrous performance.

3. *If you still want to confront a stubborn challenge.* Say, "You are so skeptical that only the most impossible conditions would satisfy you. I propose the following: Leave the room with the deck, take out a card, look at it, shuffle the cards, replace your card in the deck, shuffle them again, look through the deck to make sure the card is still there, then shuffle once more, so that even you don't know where the card is. Make sure that no one sees you do this. A trustworthy gentleman (or lady) from this group will then bring you back. Be sure not to come in until you are called, to assure that I don't see the card." Let him leave the room, and each time he looks in, say, "Wait just a moment longer. Someone will come for you in a minute. We must be absolutely certain that I can't see the card." Meanwhile you continue to perform for the rest of the group. As they are already on your side, they should find this thoroughly amusing. When the performance is over, invite the spectator in and say, "I must admit, under these conditions I can't find your card—you win." Of course, he will quickly realize who really won.

**THE SPECTATOR REFUSES TO NAME THE CARD.** This problem has been alluded to several times. At the end of the trick you hold a card face down that you have produced in a wonderful manner. You ask the spectator to name the selection and your request is refused with the words: "You're the magician. You tell me which card I chose." You could just turn the card face up. Of course, you risk the spectator's denial that this is the correct card (see "The Spectator Lies", page 468). It is always better when the spectator names the card.

1. *Reformulate Your Request to Have the Card Named.* First weaken any possible resistance by asking some positive questions: "You do remember your card, don't you?" Nod your head and wait for a positive response. Continue, "Then please name your card now, loudly and clearly." The emphasis should be on *now, loudly and clearly*. Using this strategy, the request is not as direct, since it is preceded by another question with personal implications for the spectator.
2. *Stubborn Spectators.* If the spectator still refuses to name the card, it is generally because he thinks that you can somehow manipulate the selection out of the deck at the last second and exchange it for the card you're holding (intuitively deducing the use of outs). The proper strategy in this case is to make everything perfectly clear to the spectator: "The card is on the table and I won't touch it again. If you wish, in a moment you can turn it over yourself. Please name your card loudly and clearly." You may even want to place some object on top of the card to secure it in the eyes of the spectator. This strategy succeeds with most stubborn types.



3. *Final Out.* Be straightforward and explain to the spectator, "Look, here is the only reason I want you to name your card. Because if you don't, you could simply name another card afterward, which would be most embarrassing for you, doesn't it?" By deliberately using incorrect grammar and syntax here, but remaining understandable in content, you create a moment of conversational trance in the spectator's mind. Since what you are saying doesn't conform to the way he is accustomed to organizing linguistic information, he must stop his current train of thought and start wondering what you said. Usually this mental pause shows very clearly in his eyes and facial expression, even in his entire body language. During this weak moment you pick him up mentally and give him a command. Maybe you want to say, "Now, name your card in a loud, clear voice," emphasizing the words "now", "loud" and "clear". Do try this, as it opens up a whole range of new possibilities for mental direction.

THE SPECTATOR TELLS YOU THE SECRET OF YOUR TRICK TO YOUR FACE. It really doesn't matter if a spectator's explanation is correct or not. The spectator believes it is correct, and it is in any case disruptive.

1. *False Explanation.* You have a chance if the proposed explanation is complete nonsense. You could argue logically or choose one of the responses I will provide shortly in "General and Specific Allegations" (facing page).
2. *Correct Explanation.* If the explanation is exactly right, you don't have much time to discuss it. It is best to try to make the spectator your confidant. Possible responses: "Of course that's how I do it—but the others don't need to know that." Or "How else—or did you think I could do real magic?" Or "Please don't reveal the secret for less than two thousand dollars."
3. *Hopeless Situations.* After you have tried everything and are convinced that the spectator is maliciously disrupting things, I recommend a course of action I have had to use only once in my professional career. Turn with a smile to the spectator and say, "Since you already know how the trick is done, there's no point in my performing it. You can just describe it to the others." If possible, leave the table or the group and associate with the other guests.

If you find this solution too harsh, consider that you perform first for your own enjoyment, then for that of your friends and clients. The disruptive spectator is not only disturbing you, but is destroying the illusion for everyone else.

HOPELESS SITUATIONS. Juan Tamariz has a wonderful gag, which he uses as an opening effect. You can also use it as an out. If the situation is hopeless, at the finish ask the spectators, "Do you agree that there is absolutely no way that I could find your card?" The spectators must agree. Toss the cards into the air over your shoulder and grasp the troublesome spectator's hand with both of yours. "Congratulations—I agree completely." The laughter this causes will release any tensions that have built up, opening all the doors to a successful performance.

CAN YOU DO THAT WITH MY DECK? Here is a basic concern: Should you perform with your own deck or a borrowed one? For formal, paid engagements I recommend using your own deck (of course, there are always exceptions). I generally use my own deck for spontaneous performances as well. In these circumstances, though, you can make it a specialty to perform only with a borrowed deck.



Now and again, however, you will encounter situations where someone hands you a deck and says, "Can you do that with my cards?" In principle, this is a challenge. Depending on the situation, you can react in several ways. Normally it is an advantage to accept the challenge and perform one or two effects with the borrowed deck. For that purpose, you should prepare a small but solid repertoire of effects that you can perform with the dirtiest, dog-eared deck. After that, even the most skeptical observer should be convinced that your miracles have nothing to do with the cards themselves. In such cases the following explanation has served me well: *"The deck is my instrument, just as the violin is the violinist's. Of course, a violin virtuoso can play everything on a borrowed, out-of-tune instrument, on which he has practiced daily for years."* Believe me, after this even a marginally intelligent audience will immediately beg you to use your own deck.

The reason for the request to perform with a borrowed deck stems from the fact that many laymen have heard of or actually seen such things as marked cards and stripped decks. I often deal with such situations in the following way: *"Perhaps you think I may be using a special deck, right?"* Find out what the spectator thinks and respond to it: *"Stripped cards are easily recognized. Turn a card around in the deck and run your fingers along the edges."* Hand him the deck and let him try it. A brief trial should be enough, especially since laypeople are unaware of the subtler variants available in stripped cards.

If he suspects marked cards, say, *"Marked cards have a different mark on the back of every card. Riffle the deck with the backs facing you. If the cards are marked, you will see the markings jump around like a cartoon."* This is quite an advanced explanation, which has thus far convinced every layperson I've confronted with it. You may wish to point out the brand of cards used and mention that they are suppliers to most of the major casinos. Such a firm could not risk the damage to its reputation that manufacturing trick decks would invite—which is why you only perform with their cards. This is no longer true, but was for many years, and it sounds extremely credible. I have yet to meet anyone who challenged me on it.

GENERAL AND SPECIFIC ALLEGATIONS. This topic alone could fill a book. The ideas I offer, therefore, can't be considered complete and serve only to illustrate the principle. Let's consider a few concrete allegations, that come up time and again.

*"How do you do that?"* The best answer, though admittedly hackneyed among magicians, is still *"Very well, thank you."*

*"Please teach me a trick."* Show him a difficult flourish, such as a Charlier cut (Volume I, page 172) or, even better, a one-handed riffle shuffle (page 404), and explain it in precise detail. *"Learn that first. When you've mastered that, give me a call and I'll be happy to give you a few more tips."* Give him your business card to show you are sincere. When I know that the person isn't genuinely interested, I recommend an old, out-of-print book on magic, knowing that he will never take the trouble to track it down. If I like the person and he seems sincere, I sell him my books.

*"I know that trick already."* Answer: *"Good. Then close your eyes. I'll tell you when I'm done."* Or *"Good. Then I needn't do it."* If the spectators really want to see something, they will now beg you to perform the trick.

*"Can you do that without a jacket?"* Answer: *"You know, I feel like a concert pianist. He could play piano without wearing his tails, but he wouldn't look as good."* If you are good,



you can add, "Believe me, what I do has nothing to do with the jacket. It is hard work... and a little talent."

"Those are all just marked cards." Look at the spectator making this allegation and smile, holding his gaze for a few seconds without saying anything. Then turn to a good-willed spectator and say, "It's funny, isn't it? One trusts a pianist to play well, because he has talent and years of practice. With a magician, very few people make that assumption." Now turn back to the spectator making the allegation: "It's really just as though you had accused a pianist of hiding a cassette recorder in the piano and claimed the notes didn't come from his playing." Trust me, this reasoning works. Continue as though nothing had happened. You can also add the cartoon line explained for situations when the accusation of marked cards arise (see previous page). Then hand him the deck to flip through.

"That's just all quickness of the hand." Answer: "If it were just a question of quickness, that would be pretty impressive on its own. But there is far more to it than that. Believe me, I know. It's my job." Or "Just like playing the piano. It's simply a matter of hitting the right keys at the right time and for the right length of time."

AN OUT THAT IS ALWAYS AVAILABLE. The most extreme case is one in which something has gone wrong that absolutely cannot be salvaged. Such situations are very, very rare. In hopeless cases you should always laugh at yourself—the audience will laugh with you if you have won them over! Don't take yourself too seriously. Measured on the scale of the universe and against the tragedies and comedies of human history, a failed card trick is not so terrible, is it? Say, "Well, that was an experiment, and experiments don't always work." Then perform a strong trick that you know you have mastered particularly well.

## Conclusion

Always and in every case conclude your performance on a positive note. The spectators won't recall the individual incidents, but instead the good experience you have given them. At the conclusion, many spectators will forget the mistake or believe that you did it intentionally to draw attention to the difficulty of your presentation.

## Planning Outs

Knowing and mastering the above strategies and measures provides you with a fine way of being prepared for problems—a fine way, but not the very best. What is the best way? Know that such situations can occur and undertake everything in your power to prevent them. How can you translate this thought into reality?

For each trick, think about the technical problems that could occur. Then consider the various allegations the audience might voice. The systematic discussion just presented should help you in this. Write down each point of potential trouble you anticipate. Then, as you gain experience with the trick in actual performance, expand this list from time to time, adding the unforeseen difficulties that arise. The really unusual situations won't spring from your imagination but from experience. Next to each of the problems you have listed, write out several possible solutions, at least one of which must be particularly good. Through this exercise you will have done your very best to nip awkward situations in the bud. In any case, you will have forged the confidence needed to master virtually any situation. As you can see, confidence is not simply a talent or character trait, but a product of hard work as well. And there is no excuse for not working hard enough.



### Author's Confession

And now, here at the end, a little comfort for the despairing among you: I could not have written this section on disasters and disturbances had I not encountered nearly every situation described—and I (and my audiences) have happily survived them all.

### Recommended Reading

Cava, Roberta, *Difficult People: How to Deal with Impossible Clients, Bosses and Employees* (University of Toronto: Toronto; 1992, ISBN 1-55013-186-9). If only half of what is promised in the title is true, you should read this.

Farrelly, Frank and Jeffrey M. Brandsma, *Provocative Therapy* (META Publications: Capitola; 1974, ISBN 0-916990-03-6). This is a wonderful book, written by a famous psychotherapist who maintains that you should tell your patient that he is obnoxious if his behavior is suitably swinish. I think we can learn a great deal from this book as communicating magicians.

Fisher, Roger and Scott Brown, *Getting Together: the Art of Avoiding Conflicts, Generating Conflict Solutions and Encouraging Cooperation* (Viking Penguin: New York; 1989, ISBN 0-14-012638-4). The title tells it all.

Hopkins, Charles H., "Outs", *Precautions and Challenges* (Hades Publications: Calgary; 1940). The author undertakes an attempt at systematization. You will find in this booklet numerous practical tips and tricks for overcoming unexpected situations.

Lorayne, Harry, *The Epitome Location* (Lorayne: New York; 1976). Here Lorayne describes an excellent approach to an old method for calculating a card removed from the deck by running through the rest of the cards. This is an extremely practical out when a spectator simply takes a card and sticks it in his pocket.

Woodall, Marian K., *Thinking on Your Feet: Answering Questions Well, Whether You Know the Answer or Not* (Professional Business Communications: Lake Oswego; 1987, ISBN 0-941159-01-9). Again the title tells you most of the story: interesting strategies that can be applied in many situations.



# The Study of Card Conjuring

The Lord rewards His people in their sleep, or so they say. But I can assure you that this is only the case if one has made a thorough effort to achieve something in the first place. And even though practice makes perfect, to cite another ancient proverb, we all know that only proper practice makes perfect. But how does one practice properly?

The term *study* encompasses a breadth of activities, having as their goal the mastery of a specific field. Some of these activities are common to all fields of study, and you can read about them in the literature devoted to each (see "Recommended Reading", page 485). They are as valid for your professional studies as they are for your study of card conjuring, and will only be cited here, not discussed. Other activities are specific to the study of card conjuring and will be discussed in detail. In this section you will encounter some of the most recent findings regarding the theory and practice of practicing. These will allow you to obtain good results in less time and with less effort. It makes no difference if you are a hobbyist, an amateur or a professional magician; you owe it to your audiences, your colleagues and the public image of magic to do what you do as well as it can be done.

## Choosing, Sifting and Collecting Material

**SOURCES, CHOICE AND FILES.** It doesn't matter if you are just learning magic or are already experienced: There will always be the problem of choosing the tricks that you wish to learn. Sources include magic books, magazines, videos, audio cassettes, lectures, workshops, conventions, private lessons and personal contacts.

The criteria that govern the choice of material has been discussed in the section titled "Construction" (page 426).

**WORK HABITS.** Good work habits help you to assimilate this material efficiently and digest it quickly. Read a book on good work habits (see "Recommended Reading") or take a class. Your work habits are your tools for the study of card conjuring. Make sure you have the best possible tools from the very start.

**THE FILE.** The material you choose and sift through is only of value if you can remember it or retrieve it. Your notes, copies, and so on can be organized in a traditional filing system or stored in a computer database. I have at least a dozen ways of filing information. Since this is not a course in file organization, I'll give you just a few examples. I have a file organized by name, which currently starts with "Allerton, Bert" and ends with "York, Scotty", and includes hundreds of names in-between. Each time I come across a piece of useful information (letter, publicity item, unpublished trick, lecture note, program, etc.) I make a photocopy or drop the original directly in the appropriate file folder. I have the same type of file organized by subject, which currently runs from "Bibliographies" to "Wal-jokes, gags and presentational ideas. These are only a few of the many ways you can store information for later retrieval. (In his foreword to this course, Tamariz told you that I'm a little Swiss-German, too, didn't he?)

**THE NOTEBOOK.** I recommend that you always carry a small notebook and a pencil with you, to record any spontaneous ideas and observations. You can always transfer these



thoughts to your larger filing system later. I use a pocket ring-binder with alphabetical index tabs. For easy access, I have organized themes alphabetically by their first letters, each theme having a new page with a red heading. Here are some examples: anecdotes, books (general) to order, books (magic) to order, cards, coins, close-up, contacts, conventions, miscellaneous, presentation ideas, questions, techniques. The tabbed index pages themselves allow my notebook to double as an address book.

### *Studying a Card Trick*

From your discovery of a trick, through its study, to its mastery, you will be climbing various rungs on the ladder toward perfection. It is useful to know where one stands on this ladder at any given moment and one should always keep the final goal in view. The great master Ascanio distinguishes seven levels.

1. *Understanding.* As one reads, one tries to place the individual phases of a trick into context with its overall conception. One must first try to recognize how the effect should look to a spectator. At this point it is best to walk through the description of the trick with cards in hand. This also places one's learning process in the solid, three-dimensional world. Lessons are more easily understood and better remembered.

After this step, you are ready to decide whether you want to add the trick to your repertoire, whether you simply want to study it for academic reasons (perhaps because it incorporates several interesting new techniques), whether you want to file it away for future study (perhaps placing a copy in your filing system) or whether it's useless to you. You must go through this process each time you seek out new material. This is also your best protection against the temptation to simply copy the repertoire of a colleague.

2. *Practice.* Once you have understood the trick, you can begin to practice its individual phases with deck in hand, either by themselves or in sequence. As you practice the individual phases, always keep in mind the overall effect. You should begin to think about the timing and misdirection, without going into it too deeply. At this point the purely mechanical and motor-skill aspects of the performance are your main concerns. You will need to give individual attention to new sleights that you haven't mastered completely. Only begin to practice when you precisely understand the purpose of the sleight and how it must be accomplished. Only when you know precisely where each finger must be at each moment of execution, and how each movement is coordinated, can you proceed in your pilgrimage toward mastery.

Many, frankly, never get beyond the practice stage. However, you need not be a professional to proceed. All you need are enthusiasm and the joy that comes from giving one's best. That is a human privilege, not a professional one. Eventually you should be able to go through the mechanics of the trick more or less competently. To avoid incorporating mistakes, you next move to the corrective phase.

3. *Corrections.* It is often useful at this point to re-read the trick, or to watch it again on videotape, or to listen to it on audiocassette. Important details of technique, timing and misdirection, previously overlooked, will now often be discovered. The script has been assimilated and you begin to adapt the trick to your own performing style. When constructing a longer routine, you will now begin to get a feeling for the point in the routine where this trick might be appropriate, or where other tricks might fit well.



4. *Corrective Training—Practice and Rehearsal.* Now go through the entire trick, complete with script and all the details, technical and presentational, that make it both deceptive and interesting.

American magician Eugene Burger wisely emphasizes in his writings the difference between practice and rehearsal. Only when you have mastered the technical aspects of the method and presentation of a trick, can you begin to rehearse it. Rehearsal demands a different discipline than practice. You can practice any of the individual components at any time, in any spare moment. But rehearsal encompasses all the elements that make a trick successful in actual performance. In rehearsal you perform the entire trick from beginning to end, just as if an audience were present. You then critically analyze your performance and correct the problems encountered. Then rehearse it again. Repeat this process every day for as long as it takes to master the trick. In this phase you can introduce the use of tools such as a video recorder, which we will discuss shortly.

At this point it can be useful to perform the trick for a few close friends and acquaintances, and analyze their reactions. Consult with your magical colleagues. Seek out criticism and take any praise at this point with a grain of salt. The trick cannot yet be as flawless as some well-meaning people would have you believe.

5. *Mastery.* Up to this point you have invested a great deal of work into the study of the trick. Only now are you ready to present it to an audience. Don't believe those who tell you that you can only learn a trick in front of an audience—these people are too lazy to think things over and rehearse intelligently. It is true that only in front of an audience can one fully assimilate and perfect a trick, but you still must master it first.

Above all, learn to listen to your audiences. Evaluate their positive and negative responses, and build on the knowledge they have given you. Eliminate possible explanations. Audiences are great teachers! The well-known German magician, Wolff, Baron von Keyserlingk, says, "*No magician will be a good magician if he accepts any teacher other than the audience.*" With intelligence and sensitivity, you will arrive after some experience in performance at the level of internalization and full command.

6. *Internalization and Full Command.* You now have mastered the trick in a professional sense. Through regular rehearsal and performance you should be able to maintain this level of competence. Then, just maybe, you might achieve the seventh level.
7. *Perfection.* You may never reach this level in your entire life, and if you do, it will be only with a few tricks. Perfection is a divine attribute which serves us mortals as an ideal, a model to strive toward. But a knowledge of perfection keeps us from standing still. Often one discovers only after years of experience in performance a detail that can be incorporated and that makes the trick a bit better, though not yet quite perfect. Striving toward perfection is a vision guiding all our activities. The moment of perfection is enlightenment. The trick becomes a work of art.

I do not believe I have reached the level of perfection with any trick. It is enough for me to know that I have mastered a trick well and internalized it. Remember: Very good is better than perfect!

## General Remarks

SELF DISCIPLINE. Dai Vernon has warned against habits that turn practice into an empty exercise.<sup>45</sup> The danger at the beginning is that one's activity is not properly focused and is



therefore unproductive. One practices this, then that, but no one thing properly. It is said that the famous American card expert Dr. James Elliott booked two rooms in every hotel he stayed in: one for sleeping and one for practicing. The latter was furnished with only a table and a chair, so that he could practice undistracted. There is something to be learned from the underlying thought here.

This is my advice: Take two or three tricks, depending on their complexity, and practice only these tricks and the requisite techniques for an entire week. I can assure you that if you follow this prescription, you will make progress as you never have before.

**THE PRACTICE PLACE.** You need a table at which you practice only card tricks. This can be a totally ordinary table, on which there is always a practice pad and some decks of cards. Or it can be a specially constructed card-table. This allows you to sit down and practice anytime the desire should strike. The book or books that you are studying at the time should always be within reach on the table, or at least in the same room.

**COPYING AND IMITATING.** You never have the right to copy word for word, sleight for sleight, what you have seen and heard someone else perform, even if this is someone whom you admire greatly. This is true even if you know that what you have seen doesn't belong to the person you saw perform it. On the other hand, it is a quite natural process in one's development to imitate an admired individual, without adopting their specific tricks, gestures, sayings or postures. Unfortunately, there are many, both beginners and professionals, who make no distinction between copying and imitating. It is purely up to you if you wish to be added to this list. François Truffaut had good reason, in his famous interview with the grand master of suspense, Alfred Hitchcock, to remark: *"You can never overtake someone in whose footsteps you follow."*

**CONTACT WITH KINDRED SPIRITS.** In only a few cases can one achieve mastery of a field if one works in isolation. The creation of ideas is often a solitary process, but mastery is more easily reached if you can listen to others. There are numerous aspects that cannot be communicated by the written word or an illustrated sequence of movements. You can learn a tremendous amount from your betters and a great deal from those whose ambitions are equal to your own.

**CRITICISMS.** Listen to and be thankful for every criticism. Your common sense will tell you what to act on and what to ignore. Attend all the performances you can. Remember that no performance is a waste of time—you can always learn from bad examples.

**LEARNING DIFFICULTIES—MENTAL BLOCKS.** You can start with the fundamental assumption that the anatomy of your hands and your skin type will present no obstacles in learning a sleight. Any limitations you have are likely to be psychological, not physical in nature.

Believe me, that is good news, because it means that you can learn anything you truly want to. And that may be bad news: Do you really want to? Your desire to learn a technique or trick will determine the success of your practice sessions. If you are committed to learning something, you will do so. If you encounter motor-skill problems in a sleight, frequently it will arise from a mental block. How can you remove it? First, desire success and review your reasons for wanting to master the sleight or trick in question. Second, go back and review the description carefully. Perhaps you've overlooked an important detail. Begin slowly and increase speed in accordance with your increased understanding and coordination. Third, take a break for a few days. Give your subconscious time to absorb



the previous training. When you begin again, you will often notice that you make a tremendous leap in progress. Fourth, don't force success—practice only as long as it is fun. The more you force yourself, the less you will achieve. Only purposeful activity that springs from a love of practice will bring quick results. The more effort you make, the more the required time will seem like an obligation. But it does take time. Fifth, practice other techniques and tricks in-between. If you follow these steps, you will dismantle the mental blocks and pave a path to success.

**PRECISION BEFORE SPEED.** Practice each sleight slowly, increasing tempo gradually until you reach the speed necessary for performance. Precision should always be your first priority. You must understand exactly how each sleight is managed and why it is done this way and not another. Learn to execute a sleight precisely, absorbing all the details, studying the exact fingerings—and only then pay attention to speed. This plan of study guarantees that you will learn the technique properly from the outset.

**A PLEA TO KEEP PRACTICE FUN.** Don't view practice as an obligation. If you don't think that practice is going to be great fun for you, then you should probably not pursue an interest in card conjuring. Dai Vernon was a life-long supporter of the idea that practice should be an enjoyable activity. And Ascario ascribes success in magic to three factors: practice, reflection and love.

It's important that your study of a technique not be motivated merely by its utility in a given trick (although that is a worthy partial goal). Your motivation should also come from the joy that practicing it will give you. Studying a technique is anything but a dry affair. It demands the ability to analyze and synthesize, to exercise a refined sensitivity, inner peace, concentration and much more. All these are attributes that you must either have or develop, and that can have a decisive influence on the development of your character. I would like to go so far as to claim that the regular and serious study of card conjuring builds character and thus serves an important educational function. In this sense, the serious study of card conjuring brings together aspects of Zen meditation, in which, among other things, the practitioner attempts to liberate his thoughts from anything incidental and to concentrate exclusively on the object, his body and his breathing. Only this attitude will ultimately result in the symbiosis of the deck and its wielder. When this goal has been reached, some aspect of real magic has surely been achieved as well. No one demands that you accomplish this now. But keep the thought constantly in mind and you will find that even in the simple turnover of a card you will be superior to most practitioners of magic tricks.

In this sense, one can say that practice is not an obligation and does not merely serve the pursuit of a goal. No more so than cooking for a devoted chef, or painting for an inspired artist. Both are most likely a bit saddened when the meal has been prepared or the painting completed. So too in magic, except that we go a step further, since the technique learned serves us as a means to transmit the idea of a magic effect to a live audience and, in so doing, to express ourselves.

**THE PRACTICE INSTRUMENT.** When practicing, always use relatively new, and in any case, fresh cards. This corresponds to the actual situation experienced in a live presentation. This seems obvious, but the opposite is frequently encountered in practice: Practice with the same cards you use in performance. It is false economy to use cheap cards in practice, then to perform with good cards. You will save yourself frustration and embarrassment by using good cards throughout.



**THE RHYTHM AND DURATION OF PRACTICE.** You have probably already noticed that we do not learn in a linear fashion. What does that mean? You might practice for days and see a little progress each day. You then continue your daily practice, but have the feeling that you are standing still. You give up. A week or so later you decide to try the technique again, because it fascinates you. Within a few minutes of beginning the practice session all the obstacles seem to have been overcome—everything goes smoothly. What has happened? Because learning is a mental and physical process, it can happen that the muscles are capable of performing certain processes, but the mental training lags behind. Thanks to the creative pause, the material is internalized on a subconscious level and the foundation for physical mastery is forged. When you then resume your practice after a few days' interruption, a tremendous leap in progress results. This suggests a general practice plan for sleights, which in my experience works very well and may be divided into three steps:

1. *Short-term Practice.* During the course of the day, practice the technique for a few minutes at intervals separated by a few hours. This can occur playfully during otherwise unproductive activities (watching television, stuck in traffic, listening to music, waiting at the doctor's office, etc.).
2. *Middle-term Practice.* Keep up the short term practice sessions for four or five days.
3. *Long-term Practice.* Every four or five days take a week-long break from this particular sleight. Then begin your practice cycle again, from the very beginning if necessary.

## Accessories

There are several accessories that will serve you well in your practice sessions. Some of these are closely guarded secrets of top card-experts, published here for the first time.

### *An Oversized Deck*

There are advertising and specialty playing cards available that are somewhat larger than poker size. Most sleights will be more difficult with them. However, if you practice with such a deck for fifteen minutes, then switch back to poker size, every movement will seem easier. If you are familiar with medicine ball exercises for basketball, you will understand the principle at work.

### *Hand Weights*

Go through the motions for a trick without the actual props, but with weights in your hands. Some phases can even be practiced with a heavy metal block the size of a deck of cards. This will make your actual handling seem practically weightless. An example of this idea in action is Walter Irving Scott, the legendary American card cheat, who when learning the pass practiced the actions with two blocks of brass.

### *Hand Strength Exerciser*

There are dozens of tools designed to strengthen one's grip. Many were designed for tennis players. The best type for card conjurers is a unit made of heavy spiral spring wound into a diamond shape, which you squeeze together. Exercise with such a device will give you a supple, secure grip.

### *Qui Gong Balls*

These "meditation balls" are available in most Asian import stores, and many health food and alternative medicine stores as well. They develop the fine-motor coordination of different muscle groups in the hand.



### *The Metronome*

Juan Tamariz, in his extraordinary lecture on the meaning of rhythm in magic, recommends the use of a metronome. For example, try practicing an Elmsley count with different rhythm settings. A different rhythm of execution can create an entirely different effect.

### *A Soft Surface*

Using a pad with lots of give makes many sleights easier. The disadvantage is that, when performing these sleights, you will always need the pad.

### *The Mirror*

Practicing magic in front of a mirror has become a cliché. In fact, training in front of a mirror can be useful, and it can be dangerous. However, during the first few years, a mirror is unequivocally recommended.

Use a large, three sectioned mirror that you can set on the table. Choose mirrors that are not too small, the ideal surface being about twelve inches by eighteen. This allows you to see more than just your hands. The three sections permit you to check a technique from the front and both sides. If you tip the center mirror slightly forward, you will see the deck from the spectators' point of view.

The danger in using a mirror is that you become accustomed to staring into it. In performance, you must look at your spectators eyes. If you keep this fundamental principle in mind, then practice in front of a mirror can be of great help during the second level of practice. Later you can work with a full-length wardrobe mirror that will aid your study of gestures, body language and facial expressions. Never practice your whole program in front of the mirror, or you will develop the habit of looking at the area of the mirror reflecting the sleight during the critical moments of execution. In performance it will look as if you have shifted your gaze from the eyes of the audience to a dead point in space. Since the spectators are always aware of your eyes, shifting your gaze signals the execution of the sleight to them. Blinking is also extremely revealing and stems from the fact that in practice in front of a mirror, one has a tendency to blink at the moment the sleight is executed. Ideally, you should supplement your mirror practice with the use of a video recorder (a tool we will discuss momentarily).

### *The Tape Recorder*

The clever American part-time professional Gene Anderson recommends the tape recording of your actual performances. Record several performances and listen to the tape immediately afterward. Identify sources of mistakes and correct their causes. Note spontaneous expressions by you and your spectators for future use. Modern miniature recorders the size of cassette tapes can record in stereo and are better suited than portable dictation recorders, as the cassette can be played anywhere and the recording quality is outstanding. By copying selected sequences of a performance to a compilation tape you can build an audio archive of your repertoire.

### *The Video Recorder*

The benefits received from audiotape recordings are significantly augmented when one uses a video recorder. You can, of course, make videotapes of performances and review them later. However, video recording is an outstanding means for practicing. To better understand this, let's look at an example courtesy of Juan Tamariz.



Let's assume you wish to practice top palming (page 273) with your right hand. The palming takes place as you square the deck, after which the deck is set down on the table.

1. Place the camera in front of you. Execute the palm during the squaring action ten times.
2. Now execute the squaring action ten times without palming the card.
3. Finally execute an alternating sequence of squaring actions, with and without palming.
4. Repeat this sequence with the camera on the left and then on the right—this will simulate views from the sides.
5. Watch the videotape and make the necessary adjustments to correct your technique. The palming action must resemble the innocent action as closely as possible.
6. Now comes the test. On a piece of paper write the words *palm* and *normal* five times each, ordering them randomly in a column. Example: palm—normal—palm—palm—normal—normal—normal—palm—palm—normal. Record yourself executing this random sequence of palming the card or simply squaring the deck.
7. Take a coffee break to give yourself enough time to forget the exact sequence.
8. Look at the videotape and make a list of those times you believe you were palming the card and those times you were simply squaring the deck.
9. Compare the lists. If they match, there is still a visible difference between the two actions. Correct the error and practice some more. Repeat this process as often as necessary.

The great advantage offered by videotape is the time-delay possible between the performance and your critique of it. Because of the dissociation this time-delay promotes, you can be more objective than is possible with instantaneous critiques or mirror practice.

## *Training Techniques*

### *How Does One Practice Theory?*

The procedures for practicing the pass or an Ambitious Card routine are fairly obvious and straightforward. But how is it possible to practice theory? In my many years of practicing, and in discussions with prominent experts, a procedure has crystallized that I want to share with you here, a procedure that will, after several weeks of use, have an unimagined effect on your progress.

First, make a list of those elements of theory and performance that you want to learn: pauses, generous motions, eye contact with the audience, timing, gestures, diction, etc. Then take a trick that you have already mastered technically and that you have performed a few times. For several days, practice this trick while concentrating solely on the theoretical elements under development; that is, pay attention only to the pauses in the script, to the sequence of motions, whatever it is that you wish to improve. What you now learn will be retained not merely as knowledge, but also as ability, and it will be applied automatically to every other trick that now is or later will be in your repertoire. Continue this training and study with other aspects of theory. Within a few months you will have internalized the most important theoretical elements.

### *Mental Training*

It has been scientifically established that repeated physical activity produces changes on the surface of the brain. It follows that there is an important connection between practicing



and thinking. Thinking by itself produces no significant changes, but a combination of thinking and handling produces the greatest progress in learning. We have already discussed the physical aspect of practice. Now let's look at how we can increase the effectiveness of practice with specific mental training: thought practice.

Mental training is not only one of the best training principles, but is also probably the best means of combating nervousness and excessive stage fright. For some time now, mental training has been recognized as much more than a catchword. Since these techniques have been embraced at managerial levels, most well-informed people know about the effect of these ideas on our everyday lives. And what is good enough for our everyday lives is fine for our study of card conjuring. A scientific insight states: The vegetative nervous system cannot be influenced by will—but it can be by imagined images. The American writer and philosopher Prentice Mulford says, "*All imagination is an invisible reality, and the longer and more intensely it is held onto, so much more surely will it be transformed into a form of being that one can feel, see, touch and perceive.*"

One's mental training can be very brief. If, for example, you want to learn the top change, you might proceed as follows. Set down the deck, close your eyes and imagine that you are executing a perfect top change. No unnecessary finger motion, no snags, relaxed. This presupposes that you are familiar with all the technical details. You can carry out the mental training by itself, or in combination with physical training. As with the latter, mental training is only effective if it is done regularly.

With this procedure, you can practice not only techniques, but routines and entire programs quite effectively. Run through the whole routine in your mind, as though performing it for a live audience. Don't imagine an exaggerated success, but simply the best possible circumstances that could occur in an ideal performing situation: inner calm, spontaneity, perfect technique, laughter, applause, positive feedback, etc. Coupled with serious training, this will yield unimagined success. The top athletes in the world have based their triumphs on this.

The best thing about mental training is that you can carry it out at any time and no one else will know it. Of course, the subconscious movements of your hands and your closed eyes might appear somewhat eccentric to the uninitiated passengers sitting opposite you on the subway.

### *Concluding Remarks*

This section tells you all it is necessary for you to know to learn the techniques, tricks and theories in this course. You need only apply the knowledge. No one expressed this better than Einstein, when he said, "*All means prove to be just clumsy tools without a living intellect to guide them. But when the yearning for the achievement of a goal takes possession of us, we will not lack the strength to find the means to reach the goal and translate our yearning into deeds.*" And Michelangelo once said to an apprentice, "*Draw, Antonio, draw. Draw and lose no time.*"

What could I possibly add to that best of all advice?

### *Recommended Reading*

Bliss, Edwin C., *Doing it Now: Action, not Excuses!* (Bantam: New York; 1984, ISBN 0-553-27875-4). A wonderful book that teaches you how to stop procrastinating.



- Gallwey, Timothy, *The Inner Game of Tennis* (Bantam: New York; 1984, ISBN 0-553-27372-8).
- Garfield, Charles A., *Peak Performance: Mental Training Techniques of the World's Greatest Athletes* (Warner Books: New York; 1989, ISBN 0-446-39115-8).
- Herrigel, Eugen, *Zen in the Art of Archery* (Random House: New York; 1971, ISBN 0-394-71663-9).
- Hyams, Joe, *Zen in the Martial Arts* (Bantam: New York; 1982, ISBN 0-553-27559-3).
- Meynert, Lennart, *Life Management: Live Better by Working Smarter* (Oldcastle Business Books: England; 1989, ISBN 0-948353-1). I consider this the best and most easily understood book of its kind. It contains hints that I immediately applied to my daily work routine.
- Millman, Dan, *Way of the Peaceful Warrior* (H. J. Kramer, Inc.: Tiburon; 1984, ISBN 0-915811-00-6).
- Morehouse, Laurence E. and Leonard Gross, *Maximum Performance* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1977).
- Seiwert, Lothar J., *Time is Money: Save It* (Irwin Professional Publishing: Burr Ridge; 1989, ISBN 1-55623-185-7).
- Suzuki, Shunryu, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind: Informal Talks on Zen Meditation and Practice* (Weatherhill: New York; 1970, ISBN 0-8348-0079-9).



# Bibliographic Notes

Publication dates shown reflect those of first editions; however, in instances where publishers have changed, the publisher thought to be most recent is given.

- <sup>1</sup>See Dai Vernon's *Further Inner Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson, Supreme Magic Co.: Bideford; 1961, last paragraph on page 26.
- <sup>2</sup>See "III. To Retain the Whole Pack in a Certain Order" in *Greater Magic* by John Northern Hilliard, Carl Waring Jones: Minneapolis, 1938; also Kaufman and Greenberg: Washington, D.C.; 1994, page 167.
- <sup>3</sup>See *Greater Magic*, page 189.
- <sup>4</sup>See "Subconscious Poker II" in *The Pallbearers Review*, Vol. 9, No. 2, Dec. 1973, Fulves: Teaneck; page 687. Reprinted in *Modern Close-up Card Problems* by J. K. Schmidt: New York; 1981, page 23.
- <sup>5</sup>See "The Surprised Gambler" in *Cut the Cards* by Martin Gardner, Gardner: Chicago; 1942, page 11. Reprinted in *Martin Gardner Presents*, Kaufman and Greenberg: Washington, D.C.; 1993, page 385.
- <sup>6</sup>See "Two Hands: Four Aces" in *Super Card Man Stuff* by Al Leech, Magic, Inc.: Chicago; 1965, page 37.
- <sup>7</sup>See "Casanova Card Trick" in Edward Marlo's *Deck Deception*, Magic, Inc.: Chicago; 1942, page 5.
- <sup>8</sup>See "Sleeve Aces" in *Variations* by Earl Nelson, Magic Corner Inc.: Los Angeles; 1978, page 65. In second edition, Mark Wilson Publications: Los Angeles; 1979, page 52.
- <sup>9</sup>See "Popovers" in *Packet Magic* by J. K. Hartman, Hartman: Larchmont, N.Y.; 1972, page 2. Reprinted in *Hartman's Card Craft*, Kaufman and Greenberg: Washington, D.C.; 1991, page 140.
- <sup>10</sup>See "Topping the Deck" in *Select Secrets* by Dai Vernon, Vernon: Brooklyn; 1941, page 7.
- <sup>11</sup>See "The Homing Card" in *Stars of Magic*, Louis Tannen: New York; 1948, page 41. While this has long been considered the creation of Francis Carlyle, there is reliable anecdotal evidence to suggest that significant portions of the routine were invented by Jimmy Grippo and shown by him to Mr. Carlyle.
- <sup>12</sup>See *The Royal Road to Card Magic* by Hugard and Braue, Faber and Faber: London; 1948, page 169.
- <sup>13</sup>See "Penetration of Matter" in *New Era Card Tricks* by A. Roterberg, Roterberg: Chicago; 1897, page 57.
- <sup>14</sup>See "The Phantom Aces" in *Thirty Card Mysteries* by Charles T. Jordan, Jordan: Petaluma; 1919, page 37.
- <sup>15</sup>See *The Card Magic of Bro. John Hamman S. M.* by Bro. John Hamman, 1958, LePaul: Chicago; page 41.
- <sup>16</sup>See *Pallbearers Review Folio 7*, Summer 1972, Fulves: Teaneck; page 539.



- <sup>17</sup>See "The Mystic Nine" in *The Card Magic of Bro. John Hamman S. M.*, page 40.
- <sup>18</sup>See *Dai Vernon's More Inner Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson, Supreme Magic Co.: Bideford; 1960, page 5.
- <sup>19</sup>See "Twisted Location" in *M-U-M*, Vol. 66, No. 12, May 1977, page 28; or *Focus* by Phil Goldstein, 1990, Hermetic Press: Seattle; page 15.
- <sup>20</sup>See "For the Unambitious" in *Kabbala*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Oct. 1971, Racherbaumer: Metrarie; page 11. The remarkable American magician Daryl has developed a handling of this Marlo sequence that is similar in several respects to mine. This appears in *Daryl's Ambitious Card Omnibus* by Stephen Minch, Daryl: Los Angeles; 1987, page 12.
- <sup>21</sup>See "The Pop-up Card" in *Expert Card Technique* by Hugard and Braue, Dover: New York; 1940, page 285.
- <sup>22</sup>See page 292.
- <sup>23</sup>See "A Peek" in *With Anyone's Deck* by Frank Lane, Lane: Boston; 1933.
- <sup>24</sup>See "Push Through Failure" in *Phoenix*, No. 192, December 16, 1949, Elliott: New York; page 766.
- <sup>25</sup>See *Royal Road to Card Magic*, page 191.
- <sup>26</sup>See *Jacob Daley's Notebooks*, Gutenberg Press: Teaneck; 1974, item 280.
- <sup>27</sup>See *Stars of Magic*, page 109.
- <sup>28</sup>See *The Jinx*, No. 80, Feb. 1940, Annemann: New York; page 522.
- <sup>29</sup>See *New York Magic Symposium, Collection Two* by Richard Kaufman, The New York Magic Symposium: New York; 1983, page 29.
- <sup>30</sup>S. W. Erdnase's classic 1902 text, *The Expert at the Card Table*, is recommended to students interested in such gambling related techniques. Note in particular "Combination Riffle and Cuts: V. To Retain Bottom Stock" on page 44. This is a superb sequence.
- <sup>31</sup>See *The Gen*, Vol. 18, No. 5, Sept. 1962, Stanley: London; page 126. Also *Dai Vernon's Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson, Supreme Magic Co.: Bideford; 1976, page 168 (L & L Publishing edition, page 125).
- <sup>32</sup>See "Fancy Blind Cuts: I. To Retain the Complete Stock" in *Expert at the Card Table*, page 44.
- <sup>33</sup>See *Marked Cards and Loaded Dice* by Frank Garcia, Prentice-Hall, Inc.: Anglewood Cliffs; 1962, page 147. It also appears in his *Million Dollar Card Secrets*, Million Dollar Productions: New York; 1972, page 97.
- <sup>34</sup>See "Hustler's Triple Cut" in *The Annotated Erdnase* by Darwin Ortiz, A Magical Publication: Pasadena; 1991, page 257.
- <sup>35</sup>See "Snap Over Double Lift" in *Card Control* by Arthur Buckley, Arthur H. Buckley: Chicago; 1946, page 15.
- <sup>36</sup>See *The Gen*, Vol. 13, No. 8, Dec. 1957; page 240. This was reprinted in *Dai Vernon's Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic*, page 229 (L & L Publishing edition, page 176).
- <sup>37</sup>See "The One-hand Riffle Shuffle" in *Hugard's Magic Monthly*, Vol. 3, No. 7, Dec. 1945, Hugard: Brooklyn; page 175. A pretty variant by Señor Notis is described in *Dai*



Vernon's *More Inner Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson, Supreme Magic Co.: Bideford; 1960, page 31. Señor Notis cascades the cards into his left hand rather than springing the packets together.

<sup>38</sup>See *Change Your Voice—Change Your Life: a Quick, Simple Plan for Finding and Using Your Natural, Dynamic Voice* by Cooper Martin, New York: Harper and Row, 1985, ISBN 0-06-463712-3.

<sup>39</sup>*The Five Points in Magic* by Juan Tamariz, Editorial Frakson: Madrid; 1988, page 18.

<sup>40</sup>You will find the theory of false solutions formulated in great detail and with numerous examples in Tamariz's *The Magic Way*, Editorial Frakson: Madrid; 1988, page 13.

<sup>41</sup>*I am Fascinated by Everything Human* by Yehudi Menuhin, Piper Verlag: Munich; 1982, page 194.

<sup>42</sup>*The Cardician* by Edward Marlo, Magic, Inc.: Chicago; 1953, page 3.

<sup>43</sup>*The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic* by Robert-Houdin, Hoffmann translation, Magic Magazine: New York; 1878, page 74.

<sup>44</sup>*Dai Vernon's Inner Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson, Supreme Magic Co.: Bideford; 1958, page 7.

<sup>45</sup>*Dai Vernon's Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic*, page 9 (L & L Publishing edition, page 6).



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